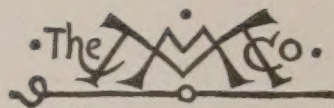


SILAS MARNER



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Castroville, California

SILAS MARNER
AN ADAPTATION



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SILAS MARNER

AN ADAPTATION

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TO MY FATHER

A FRIEND OF MAN

“A child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts.”

— WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

PREFACE

THIS book, which retells the story of one of the world's best classics in simple direct English, has three definite aims. The first is to awaken in all boys and girls the desire to read the best books in order that they may know the delights of real literature. The second is to bring together a collection of provocative material for reading and discussion by adults whose knowledge of the English language is somewhat limited. The third aim is to present subject matter which, because of its appeal to the widest human interests and the simplest human emotions, will be read by foreign-born fathers and mothers as well as by their children. As a means of learning English and of learning to appreciate truth and beauty, it will become a bond between parents and children and will lead them to understand American ideals and institutions.

This material has been carefully tested in the Los Angeles City Evening Schools. Because

of the universal appeal of the subject matter and the simple sentence structure, adult students have found it a most effective means of learning to speak English.

It has been tested in the day schools in classes of native American children, in classes of foreign-born children, and in classes where these two elements were combined, with equally good results in each case. All of the children enjoyed the story. Many boys and girls, of their own volition, haunted the libraries in their respective neighborhoods and secured the original which they then read somewhat understandingly. The fact that the children have read the original is highly gratifying, for this simple version is intended in no way to take the place of the author's own words, but, on the contrary, to serve as an introduction to one of the world's best writers.

To those who have made valuable suggestions concerning the manuscript and to those who have tested the material in their schools, the author wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness and to express her thanks. Those to whom

she is under special obligations are : Mrs. Ethel Richardson Allen, Assistant State Superintendent of Public Schools, in charge of Adult Education for the State of California ; Mr. Harry M. Shafer, Assistant Superintendent of the Los Angeles City Schools, in charge of Americanization ; Mr. Robert H. Lane, Assistant Superintendent of the Los Angeles City Schools, in charge of the course of study and the library ; Miss Flora D. Smith, Director of Immigrant Education for the City of Los Angeles ; Miss Mary McEachen, Principal of Bridge Street School, Los Angeles ; Mrs. Amanda Matthews Chase, First Home Teacher in the City of Los Angeles ; Miss Catherine Carey, Principal of John Muir Junior High School, City of Los Angeles ; and Miss Alma E. Gunning, English Teacher in the Los Angeles High School.

ETTIE LEE

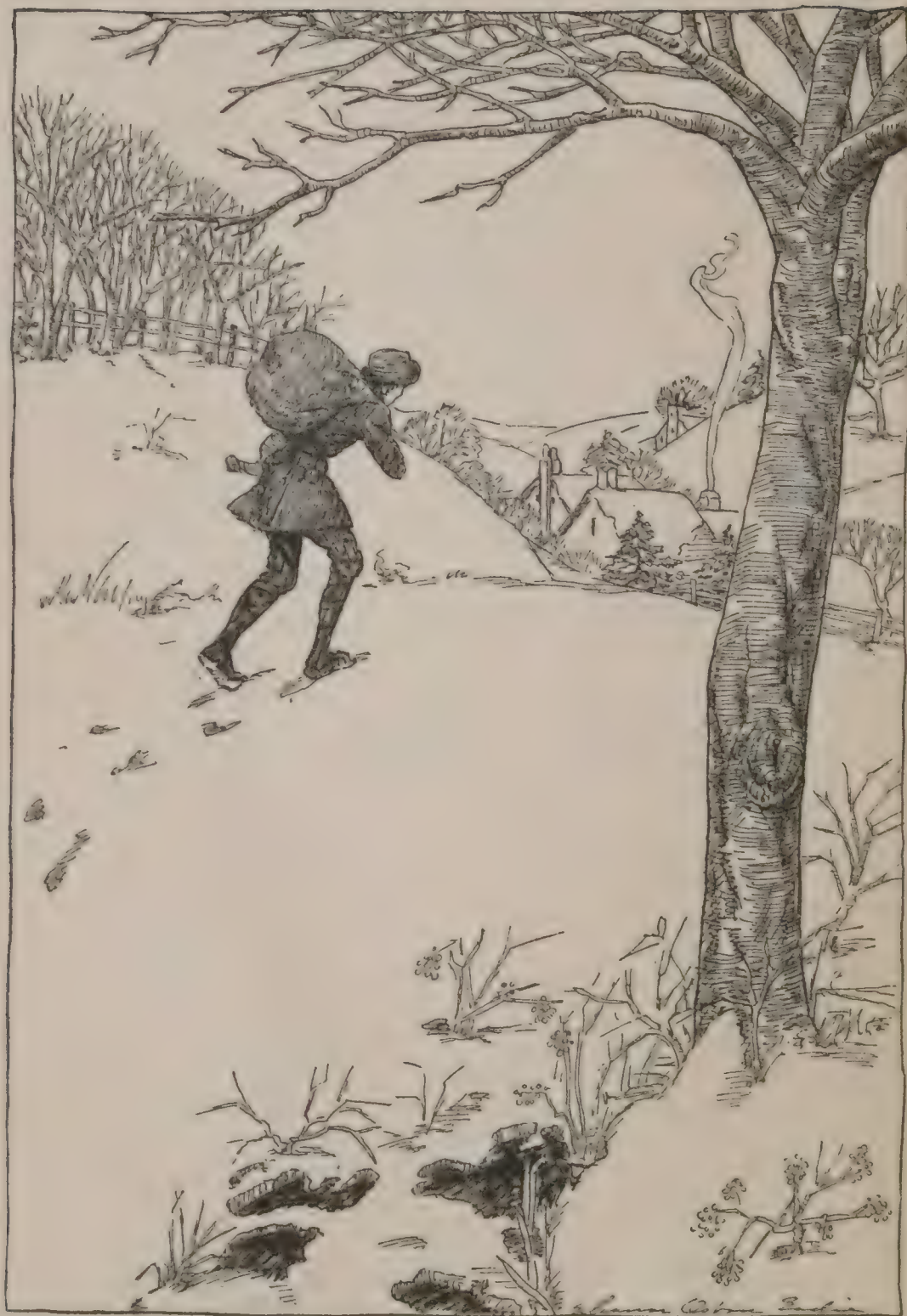
SILAS MARNER

BY ETTIE LEE

GEORGE ELIOT was an English writer of the nineteenth century. She wrote excellent stories, but she did not sign her own name to them because at that time people thought that women could not write books, teach school, or hold positions in banks or stores. Women were expected to work in their homes and do nothing else. George Eliot, whose real name was Mary Ann Evans, knew that she could write good books as well as work in her home. But she also knew that people would not read a woman's books; so, because she wanted every one to read them, she signed a man's name to her stories.

People did read George Eliot's books. Some of the English critics said that he was the best story-writer in England. These men wanted to meet Mr. Eliot and they did. They were very much surprised when they went to see him and found that *he* was a woman.

George Eliot loved children and liked to write about them. People who read her books always remember the children who live in her stories.



SILAS'S HOUSE WAS JUST OUTSIDE THE TOWN, NEAR THE DESERTED
STONE-PIT.

SILAS MARNER

CHAPTER I

THE STRANGER

“THE Evil One must help that man with his work,” said an old shepherd, as he pointed to Silas Marner. Silas was a stranger in Raveloe, and he wove cloth. Weaving seemed like a magic art to the people of those times, and they never trusted strangers. These two things taken together made most of the people in the small village eye Silas suspiciously.

“Who knows his father or mother?” they asked of one another. “Where did he come from? Why did he leave his old home? Why did he come to Raveloe? Who knows?” These simple country people could not answer their own questions; consequently they thought that Silas should not be trusted.

Raveloe was a small town in a rich, green valley of "Merry England." It was so located that the stage coach did not pass through it, and as a result the people saw very few strangers. They knew nothing about the world outside their own little town. Naturally their lives were very narrow; they were superstitious and most unfriendly to people whom they did not know.

Silas Marner had lived in Raveloe for fifteen years, but he was still as much of a stranger as when he first came there. He was a good linen weaver, and since the housewives needed linen, he had had plenty of work. But even though these people had to have cloth, some of them, as you know, suggested that the Evil One helped weavers make their cloth. Then, too, Silas had strange spells which these superstitious people could not explain. He knew that the country folk looked upon him with disfavor, but he had never tried to break down their distrust of him. Though he had lived in Raveloe for many years, he was still apart from its people.

Silas's house was just outside the town, near the deserted stone-pit. Sometimes he stood in

the doorway of his stone cottage and looked at the lovely scene around him. It was an important-looking village with an impressive old church surrounded by trees, a comfortable tavern where idle men met to gossip, and two or three large red houses with imposing stone steps leading up to them. The largest of these houses was the home of the country squire, Mr. Cass. Most of the homes, large and small, were surrounded by fields of yellow, waving grain and by apple orchards bending low with ruddy fruit.

Sometimes Silas stood in his doorway to watch the crowds of small boys who often left their nutting and came to the stone-pit, just to tease him. But when he stood and looked at them, they trembled like aspen leaves and ran quickly away.

"I don't like his eyes," said a boy, breathlessly, one day. "He may hurt us with his eyes. Besides, my mother says he has fits or something."

"Yes," said another boy, excitedly, "he stands perfectly still and looks at people. He knows

something about herbs, too. He may hurt us with his herbs."

"I'm not afraid," said a third boy, but he was still running. "He's such a little, white-faced man that I am sure he isn't strong enough to hurt us much."

Thus the boys talked on, but only after they were a safe distance from Silas's cottage.

Silas did have large brown eyes. They were too large for his face and seemed to stand out. How could the boys know that he was very nearsighted and that his eyes could not harm them at all?

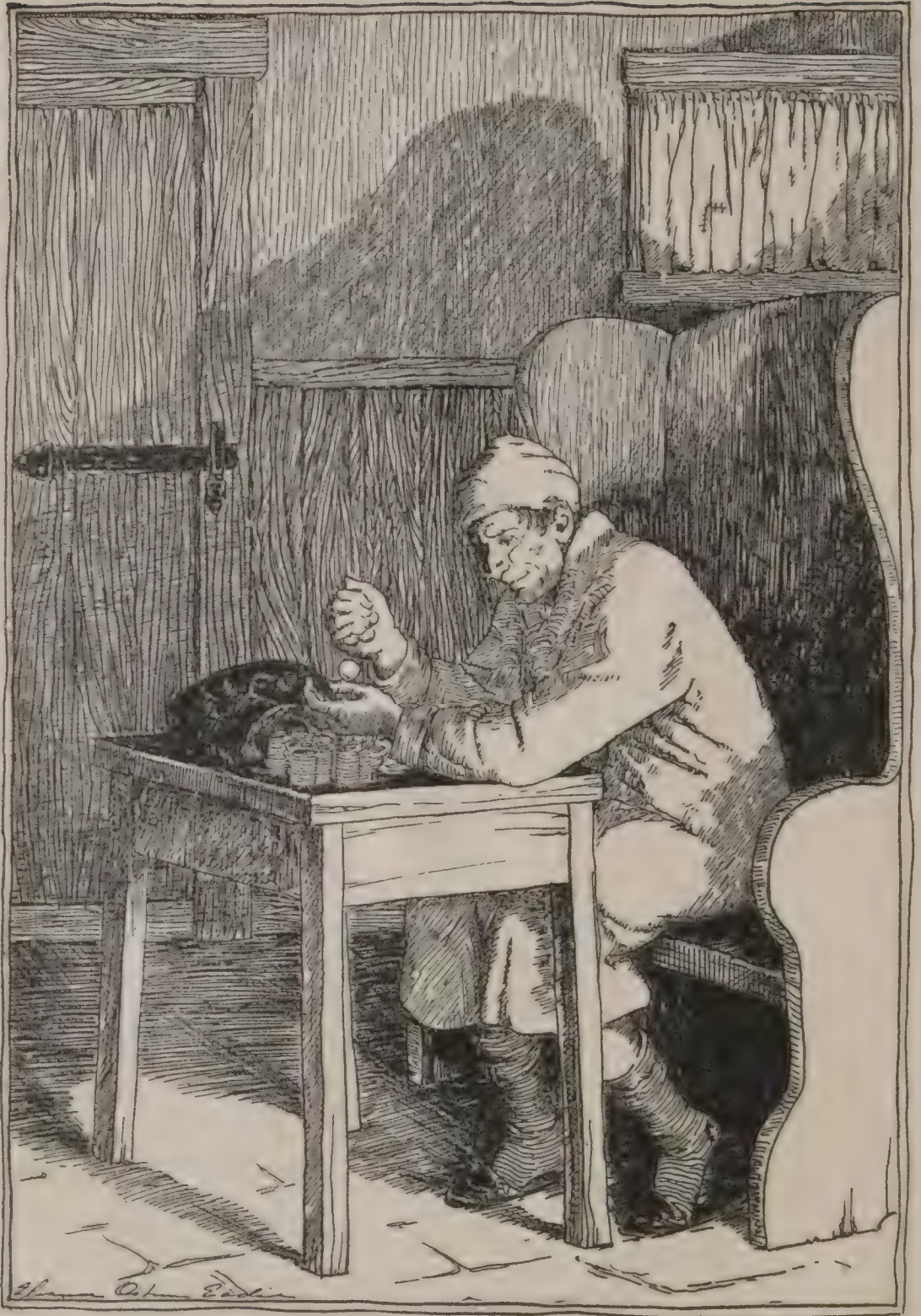
When Silas first came to Raveloe, he was a man without hope. His trade was weaving; he wove linen in order that he might have food. He was paid well for this work. At least, it seemed to him that he was paid well, because he received so much more money than he had been accustomed to receiving in his native town.

Another thing that interested Silas was that for the first time in his life he was paid in gold. He had once used his money to help other people,

but now he saved it. He liked the feel of the gold in his hands, so he saved every cent that he could. He bought cheap food in order that he might save more money. His gold became his one friend. He would hold it in his hands and let it slip slowly through his fingers. Every day he caressed it fondly, tenderly, lovingly.

Silas wove like a spider all day long, but his thoughts were ever on his gold. "MY GOLD," he would say to himself and put out his foot to touch the spot where his treasure was buried. It was in an iron kettle which he kept in a hole in the floor. This hole was directly under his loom. He could not see his gold, but he knew that it was there. He even loved the kettle that held his treasure, his beautiful gold.

When the people of Raveloe looked at Silas, they thought that he was the same nearsighted little man who had come to them fifteen years before. But he was not. They could not see it, but he had changed greatly. He had once been kind and helpful to every one, but this was no longer true. Because the people were afraid of him, they had forced him to live alone when he



HIS GOLD BECAME HIS ONE FRIEND.

longed for some one to love. So he had turned to the yellow gold which was his only friend, and soon he grew to love it devotedly. The time came when he cared for nothing but to add to his store of precious yellow metal. He had become a miser.

CHAPTER II

LANTERN YARD

BEFORE Silas came to Raveloe his life was full of work for his fellow men. He was a member of a little church called the Church of Lantern Yard. Many working people belonged to the Lantern Yard Church, and every man in it took part in some way. Silas was full of faith and very happy. The people of Lantern Yard loved him and said he was one of the best young men in the church.

Silas's church friends were interested in him because he had strange spells which they thought were signs that God was working through him. But Silas himself did not believe that God had anything to do with these queer attacks in which he stood perfectly still, with his eyes wide open, unable to speak a word or move a finger.

When Silas was a boy, his mother taught him about herbs and their value as a medicine. He

often gave them to poor people who were ill. They were very glad to have him help them because they could not afford to pay doctors' bills. But after he began his work in the church, he stopped helping people in this way, for he thought it was not right to use his herbs. After he had joined the Lantern Yard Church, he believed that people who were ill should be healed through faith and prayer. He then stopped going into the fields to gather foxglove, peppermint, dandelion, and other helpful plants. He loved the green fields and the sweet-smelling herbs, but, because of his religion, he gave them up.

Silas had one very dear friend among the brethren of Lantern Yard Church, named William Dane. William and he were often spoken of as David and Jonathan because they were always together. Silas thought his friend was perfect, but some of the people considered that William was somewhat unkind to the young men who were not quite so religious as he.

Silas had a sweetheart, a young servant woman named Sarah, who was also a member of the Lantern Yard Church. He and Sarah

were very happy together. They intended to be married as soon as they could save money enough to begin a home. Silas often invited William to go with him when he went to see Sarah, and he was very glad, indeed, that Sarah did not share other people's disapproval of his friend.

When Silas and William went to see Sarah, the three of them talked together about their church meetings and the church people. William suggested to Sarah once or twice that he believed Silas's spells came from the Evil One. But Sarah told him that he was mistaken and that she loved Silas and intended to marry him.

About this time the deacon of their church became so seriously ill that he had to have a nurse with him all the time. Silas and William took care of him at night. Silas usually sat up until two o'clock in the morning and then William came and stayed until six. One night Silas found, to his surprise, that the deacon had stopped breathing. The candle was burning low. Silas lifted up the flickering light and

looked at the old man's face. It was pallid; the deacon was dead.

Silas said to himself as he looked at the clock, "This is strange! It is four o'clock! Have I been asleep? Why doesn't William come?"

At six o'clock William did come. He brought with him the minister who said, "Brother Marner, you have grieved all of us. You must come to the church to meet the members. We want to see what you have to say."

"What I have to say!" exclaimed Silas in surprise. "What do you mean?"

"You will soon learn," was the answer. "Come with Brother William and me."

Silas went to the church. All eyes were upon him. These men were God's people to him. Why were they staring at him?

CHAPTER III

THE STOLEN MONEY

“BROTHER MARNER,” said the minister coldly, “come forward.” Silas obeyed without a word.

Taking a knife from his pocket, the minister asked, “Do you know this knife?”

“Yes, I know that knife. It is mine.”

“Where did you leave it?”

“I didn’t leave it anywhere,” answered Silas confusedly. “I thought it was in my pocket.”

“Don’t try to hide your sins from us. A brother found this knife in the drawer where the deacon kept the church money. The money is gone. You were there alone with our good brother, the deacon, when he died. Come, where is the money?”

“I don’t know,” replied Silas, as he looked first at one brother and then at another. He could see that every one thought that he was a robber.

“Brother Marner, you said yourself that you were alone with the deacon when he died. You must know where the money is. Confess your sin,” demanded the minister in a stern tone. “Don’t make your sin worse by lying about it.”

“I must have slept. I may have had a spell. Some one took the money while I was not myself. I say again, I did not take it. Search me and my room; I have been nowhere else.”

The minister and William went with Silas to his house. They carefully searched the room. William found the empty money bag, hidden behind Silas’s dresser.

“Confess your sin, Silas,” said William. “It will be much better for you.”

“William,” said Silas, turning toward him, “for nine years we have been the best of friends. Did I ever tell you a lie? God will clear me.” A look of pain crossed Silas’s face, as he added, “I remember now, William; the knife was not in my pocket. I lent it.”

“I know nothing of what you mean,” answered William.

The minister asked a few questions when he

saw that William was disturbed over Silas's saying that he had lent the knife. Silas refused to talk any more about it. "I can say nothing," he said sadly. "I am very unhappy. God will clear me."

The three men returned to the church. By this time the minister was not altogether sure that Silas had stolen the money. William's actions had made him suspicious; so he told the church members of his doubts. The brethren decided to pray, and then to have William and Silas draw lots to see who was guilty. This was done, and the lots declared that Silas Marner had stolen the money. Every man in the church looked at him sorrowfully. Every man there felt certain that the lots could not lie. Silas Marner had robbed the church.

When all the men had risen to leave, Silas went over to William and said excitedly, "I lent that pocketknife to you. You did not return it to me. You stole the money. You may prosper, for God is not just. The lots lied."

"Brethren," answered William meekly, turning to the people, "I will leave it to you. Is this

not the voice of the Evil One speaking? Silas, I will pray for you."

Silas now lost all faith in God. He left the church without saying a word, and no one spoke to him. These people's lives were pitifully narrow. They truly believed that Silas was guilty because the lots said that he was. They thought that God had pointed him out in that way. Poor Silas, whose life was equally narrow, knew that the lots had lied; so he said that God was unjust. He even said that he was a God of lies.

As Silas walked from the church, he thought, "Sarah will not marry me now." He went home and for a whole day sat alone, stunned. And then the next day the thing he feared the most happened. While he was working at his loom, some one entered the room. On looking up, Silas saw the minister, who said coldly, "Sarah asked me to say to you that she cannot marry a robber."

"Very well," replied Silas dully. He did not speak another word. But turning to his loom, he began to weave. He had already lost faith

in God, and now he lost confidence in all his fellow men.

In less than a month after this event, Sarah and William Dane were married. Not long afterwards the brethren in Lantern Yard learned that Silas had left the town. As you know, he went to Raveloe and lived by himself without one friend. He was a man without hope until he made a friend of his gold.

CHAPTER IV

SQUIRE CASS

THE richest man in Raveloe was Squire Cass, who lived in the large red house opposite the church. His stables, filled with good horses, were envied by many of the young men of the village. The Squire was wealthy; every one knew that. In fact, England was so prosperous at that time that it was called "Merry England." The men at the tavern often spoke of the good times the country was having. They always said something about Squire Cass and his money. Sometimes they spoke of Silas Marner and said that he must have some money, too, for a man could not make his spinning wheel hum like a gadfly for fifteen years without saving something. In their talks, however, no one ever seemed to think of trying to find where Silas kept his gold.

Squire Cass himself often went to the Rainbow Tavern to gossip with his friends. His wife

was dead and his home was a lonely place. His sons, who were rough and wild, were seldom at home. Some people thought that the Squire should set them to work. Many of the neighbors shook their heads over the second boy, Dunstan, or "Dunsey Cass," as they called him, and said that he surely would bring sorrow to his father.

Dunsey drank much strong liquor and bet on horse races and cards. The neighbors said it did not make much difference what became of Dunsey because he was a bad fellow. But everybody did hope that Godfrey, the older boy, would reform. Of late, he seemed to be following in Dunsey's footsteps, but he had been a well-respected young man.

"Something is certainly wrong with Godfrey Cass," said a woman to her neighbor one day. "If he keeps on, Nancy will not marry him."

"And it is too bad," replied the neighbor. "Mrs. Cass is dead. The old Squire needs a good housekeeper in his home. Nancy Lam-meter is just the person for Godfrey to marry. She's pretty and she will save. Why, no one

ever heard of a Lammeter's wasting anything, not even a pinch of salt."

"Surely the Squire needs a person like that around," said the woman. "There is so much being wasted and spent by those boys that some people say the old Squire is about to lose all his money."

"The Squire would not have to give his dinners and parties at the Rainbow if Nancy were in his home," replied the neighbor. "Mr. Godfrey should be very careful. Nancy will not approve of his way of life."

Thus the two women talked on. But while this conversation was going on in the neighbor's cozy cottage, another one was in progress in Squire Cass's dining room.

CHAPTER V

GODFREY AND DUNSEY CASS

"WELL, Master Godfrey, what do you want with me?" asked Dunsey, a thick-set, heavy-looking young man with a red face. "I came because you sent for me," he added, in a mocking tone.

"This is what I want. Now shake yourself sober and listen." (Godfrey himself had been drinking.) "I tell you I must have the rent money that Fowler paid. Father thinks he didn't pay it. He will turn Fowler off the place. You must get it; do you understand?"

"Oh," said Dunsey sneeringly, "you get it. You were kind enough to let me take it. You did it for brotherly love, you know."

"Don't come near me with that look, or I will knock you down. I tell you, Dunstan, you must get that rent money," screamed Godfrey excitedly.

"No, you won't knock me down, and I won't get the money for you. You'll borrow it or get it somehow because I might tell the Squire, our father, that you are married to Molly Farren. I might say that Molly drinks and that you can't live with her. I might, Godfrey; and your allowance would be cut off because of it. You'll get the hundred pounds rent money in some way, and I'll not bother about it, my dear brother. You may worry about it. I have no time for such things, you know."

Godfrey bit his lips and clenched his fists. "It's a lie. You'll not tell on me. I can tell too many things about you, Dunsey Cass."

"I am sorry to leave, but I have a little card game planned," said Dunstan, bowing mockingly as he opened the door to go out of the room. "I am sure you will excuse me."

Godfrey rushed over to his brother and grasped his arm, "I tell you I have no money and I must pay that hundred pounds right away."

"Borrow it," said Dunstan coolly.

"I can't borrow it. I've tried."

"Well, then, sell Wildfire."

"That's easy talking. I must have the money right away."

"Ride Wildfire to the hunt to-morrow. You can sell him before night. I know a dozen fellows who would like to buy him."

"I can't go, I've promised to attend Mrs. Osgood's dance."

"Oh, Miss Nancy will be there. You must go, and you will make up with her. You'll promise to be a good boy."

"Hold your tongue," screamed Godfrey. His face was scarlet. He wanted to take the whip that was in Dunstan's hand and beat him with it, but he controlled himself and continued more quietly, "It is just like you to talk about my selling Wildfire. You know that I love that horse. He's the best horse in all the country round."

"Well, let me sell him for you. I'll get the best price that I can for him. You have to pay that rent money, you know. It's none of my business. But I'll do the best that I can for you."

How Godfrey did want to wrench the whip from Dunstan's hand and beat him over the head with it. Instead he answered, "You may sell Wildfire; but mind you, bring all the money to me, or I will tell father the whole truth. Then we'll both lose everything together."

Dunstan left the room and Godfrey sat down to think. He was not a strong character. His first thought was to keep his foolish marriage to Molly Farren a secret. His second thought was, "What shall I do about Nancy? I can't marry her because of Molly. Father expects me to do so and I can't tell him that I am married already. What shall I do?"

CHAPTER VI

WILDFIRE

TRUE to his promise, Dunstan started out very early the next morning to sell Wildfire. He carried in his hand Godfrey's gold-handled riding whip. Godfrey's name was carved on the handle of the whip, but Dunstan knew that it would not be seen as he rode along. It was a much better looking whip than his own; hence he had taken it without asking Godfrey's permission.

"That is a cold wind even for the last of November," he said to himself as he rode along. In a very few minutes he was outside the town of Raveloe. Looking around, he thought, "Well, here is the deserted stone-pit and over there is the old weaver's cottage. That fellow has money. Why didn't I think of it before? Godfrey could borrow the money from him — or take it. It wouldn't make much difference."

Dunstan was so pleased with this new idea that he laughed aloud. At first he thought of returning to talk it over with Godfrey.

"No, I won't do it. I'll let him wait. It isn't good for him to be too happy," he thought as he rode on to join the other young men who were going hunting.

"You are riding a good-looking horse," said one of the men as Dunstan rode up. "Whose is he?"

"Mine," answered Dunstan. (The men knew he was lying.) "I wouldn't sell him for any price. He is a real horse." Dunstan meant to deceive his companions by this remark. He thought that if he seemed indifferent, he would get a better price for Wildfire.

The young men talked for a long time about Wildfire. One of them really wanted to buy the horse. At last he offered Dunstan a hundred and twenty pounds for him. Dunstan accepted it and promised to give the young man the horse that night. Dunstan was delighted over his bargain; but he thought he would have a good time riding Wildfire while he could. The horse was a good runner. He jumped well, too.

Dunstan led the other men in the hunt that day. He jumped all the fences, but he jumped one too many. Wildfire went over the high fence, but in doing so, he caught himself on the rail and cut a deep hole in his chest. Down to the earth with his heavy rider he fell. Dunstan was not hurt, but Wildfire was dead. Dunstan was so far ahead that no one saw the accident; he left the place at once.

This happened about four o'clock in the afternoon. As Dunstan looked around, he saw to his surprise that a storm was gathering. "I'll be caught in the rain. I must get a horse some way," he thought. Feeling in his pocket, he found only a small piece of money. "This will not pay for a horse to ride, and no one will trust me. I must walk, but I shall go where I shall not meet any of my friends."

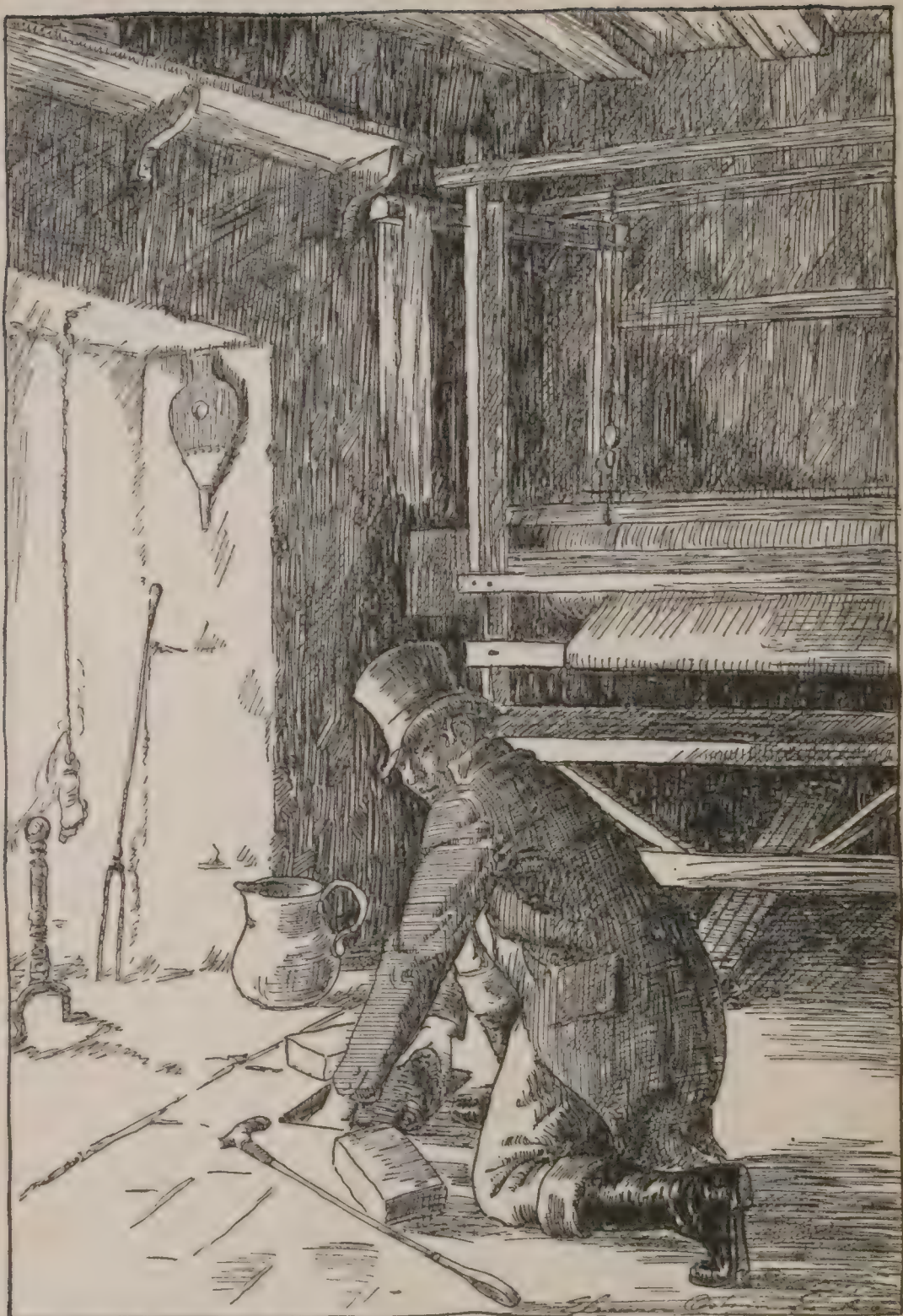
As Dunstan walked along, darkness crowded down upon him. He could hardly tell where he was going. Suddenly he saw a light. "Ah, I know where I am. That is the old weaver's cottage. While I'm here, I'll go to ask him for the money that I need. Godfrey may feel

better about Wildfire if I have something to give to him. I'll make a loud noise ; I'll frighten the old miser," Dunstan laughed coarsely to himself.

With much difficulty, Dunstan made his way to Silas Marner's cottage. He knocked loudly on the door. No one answered. He pushed the door open and went into the room. A fire was burning brightly, and a piece of meat was cooking on the spit.

"I thought he didn't eat meat. Every one says he lives on old crusts of bread. Well, he wouldn't eat this meat if it were done. Where can the old fellow be? Perhaps he has fallen into the stone-pit. It's as black as sin outside."

Dunstan looked all around the room. "Now, where does the old fool keep that money? Oh! I see the sand is much thicker under the loom. There may be a hole in the floor." He carefully moved the sand to one side. There was a hole. In a minute Dunstan was down on his knees feeling for the money. "Here it is — two bags full," chuckled Dunstan, as he took the money



"HERE IT IS—TWO BAGS FULL," CHUCKLED DUNSTAN, AS HE TOOK
THE MONEY OUT OF THE HOLE.

out of the hole. "I always was a lucky dog."

Dunstan threw the sand over the hole, shoved the bags of money under his arm, and hurried out into the darkness.

CHAPTER VII

THE LOST MONEY

DUNSTAN had not been gone from the cottage five minutes when Silas opened the door. He laid some spools of twine on the loom. He had gone to town to get them so that he could set up a new piece of linen early the next morning. He hung up the old sack which he had worn as an overcoat and turned to look at his supper. To his nearsighted eyes, everything looked just as it had done when he had left a short time before. He went over to turn his meat which was now well browned. He gave a little sniff of satisfaction as he caught the fumes from his meat. He was to have a good supper, and the best thing about it was that it had not cost him one cent. A customer had given him the meat. He had saved it for his evening meal so that he could look at his gold while he ate. Silas seldom had fruit or meat or anything else good to eat.

When he did have good food, he liked to have his gold near him. It helped him to enjoy the food.

"The meat is not quite done. I'll take out my gold and lay the pieces all around the table, while I wait," thought Silas, as he carefully pushed the sand to one side. He put his hand down into the empty hole. He could not find his gold. A feeling of terror came over him. "The gold must be here," he said to himself as he felt all around inside the kettle. He must put an end to his terror and that at once.

He dropped his candle and put his shaking hands to his head. He must think. Had he moved his gold? He searched in every corner of the cottage. He turned his bed upside down. He looked into the oven. The gold was not there. When he could think of no other place to look, he knelt down and looked into the hole again. Then he went over to the table. Had he put it there and forgotten about it?

But he could see everything in his cottage, and his gold was not there. Again he put his hands to his head. He gave a wild, ringing

scream and stood perfectly still. The scream helped him.

He walked slowly over to his loom. Work had saved him once, now he turned to it again. He wanted to make sure that he was not asleep. After he had been working for a few minutes, his thoughts became clearer. "A thief! a thief!" he cried aloud. "A thief has taken my gold! Oh, my treasure, my beautiful gold!"

Silas felt that he must find the thief. Not to put him into prison. Oh, no. His only thought was to recover his gold; the robber could go free. He thought of all the people in Raveloe. Who could have robbed him? At last he decided that it must be Jem Rodney. (Jem had seen him in a fit once and had always watched him carefully since that time.) Jem could be found. He must return the money.

"But how can I find him? How can I make him return my treasure to me?" thought poor, unhappy Silas.

Again he stood perfectly still and ran his fingers through his hair. "I have it. I'll go to the Rainbow Tavern. Jem may be there.

Some one will help me. I must have help. The thief must return my treasure to me."

The poor little trembling man rushed out of his cottage, forgetting to put on his hat. Nor did he lock the door. Why should he? His gold was gone. He ran wildly down the road. The rain beat on his face but he did not feel it. He did not stop until he reached the Tavern. Then, because he was breathless from running, he waited a moment before opening the door.

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE RAINBOW

SILAS pushed open the door of the Tavern and glided into the room like a ghost; a look of suffering was on his face. The Rainbow gossipers were frightened. They thought that he was having one of his spells; and his spells made them shudder, though they did not know why.

“Master Marner,” said the landlord, trying to keep his teeth from chattering, “what’s the matter with you? What’s your business here?”

“Robbed,” gasped Silas. “I’ve been robbed. I want a policeman, two policemen, Squire Cass, and — ”

“Lay hold of him, Jem Rodney. He must be off in his head,” said the landlord, getting a little better command of himself.

“Jem Rodney,” said Silas, turning and fixing his strange eyes on the suspected man.



SILAS PUSHED OPEN THE DOOR OF THE TAVERN AND GLIDED INTO THE ROOM LIKE A GHOST.

“Well, what do you want?” Jem tried to speak bravely, though he, too, was afraid of the weaver.

“If you stole my money, give it back to me. Oh, give it back to me,” gasped Silas, pitifully. “I won’t have a policeman arrest you, and I’ll let you have a guinea.”

“You think I stole your money? Well, I should say I did not,” answered Jem angrily. “Don’t you say that again or I’ll kick you out of this place.”

“Come,” said the landlord, “you shouldn’t say a man is a robber unless you know that he is. Did you see Jem Rodney around your place?”

“No, I was wrong to say that. I don’t want to hurt any man,” Silas replied sadly. He was thinking of his own troubles with William Dane.

“How much money did you have?” asked one of the men.

“Two hundred and seventy-two pounds, twelve shillings, and six pence,” replied Silas. “I counted it last night.” (In American money it was about one thousand three hundred and twenty-five dollars.)

"Well," said the blacksmith, "I think that three of us should go to Master Marner's house and look it over. We can't have things like this going on in town."

"Let's see how the night is," said the landlord, opening the door. "The rain is pouring down in torrents."

"Well, I'm not afraid of the rain," answered the blacksmith. "Who will go with me? I don't want to act as policeman, but I'm sure something should be done."

The landlord found an old coat and hat and made Silas put them on. Down deep in Silas's heart he felt better for having come to the Tavern. The talk with the men there had relieved his feelings somewhat. After much talking, two of the men went over to Silas's home with him. The three men watched there until morning, but they could find no clue concerning the robbery.

Early the next day, every person in Raveloe knew that Silas had been robbed. "Who could the robber be?" was the question that every one was asking.

A peddler, a stranger in town, was the person whom most people thought guilty. They believed that the peddler was the robber because a box, something like a match box, was found near Silas's home. The man who found it said, "That peddler had a box just like this one. He was a stranger, too. And strangers are not to be trusted. I'm sure that he stole the money."

The landlord replied, "Yes, he was a stranger. I think he had rings in his ears."

"Oh, yes, he did. I remember the rings very well," declared one woman.

"I remember them, too," added another. "They were two inches long and had bright stones in them."

The people in Raveloe were astonished when Silas said, "I don't think the peddler was a bad-looking man. I didn't see any rings in his ears. He was most friendly when he came to my cottage. He didn't come inside my door, nor did he give me any reason to suspect him."

But the money was gone, and no one could find it. Poor Silas was again lonely, indeed.

CHAPTER IX

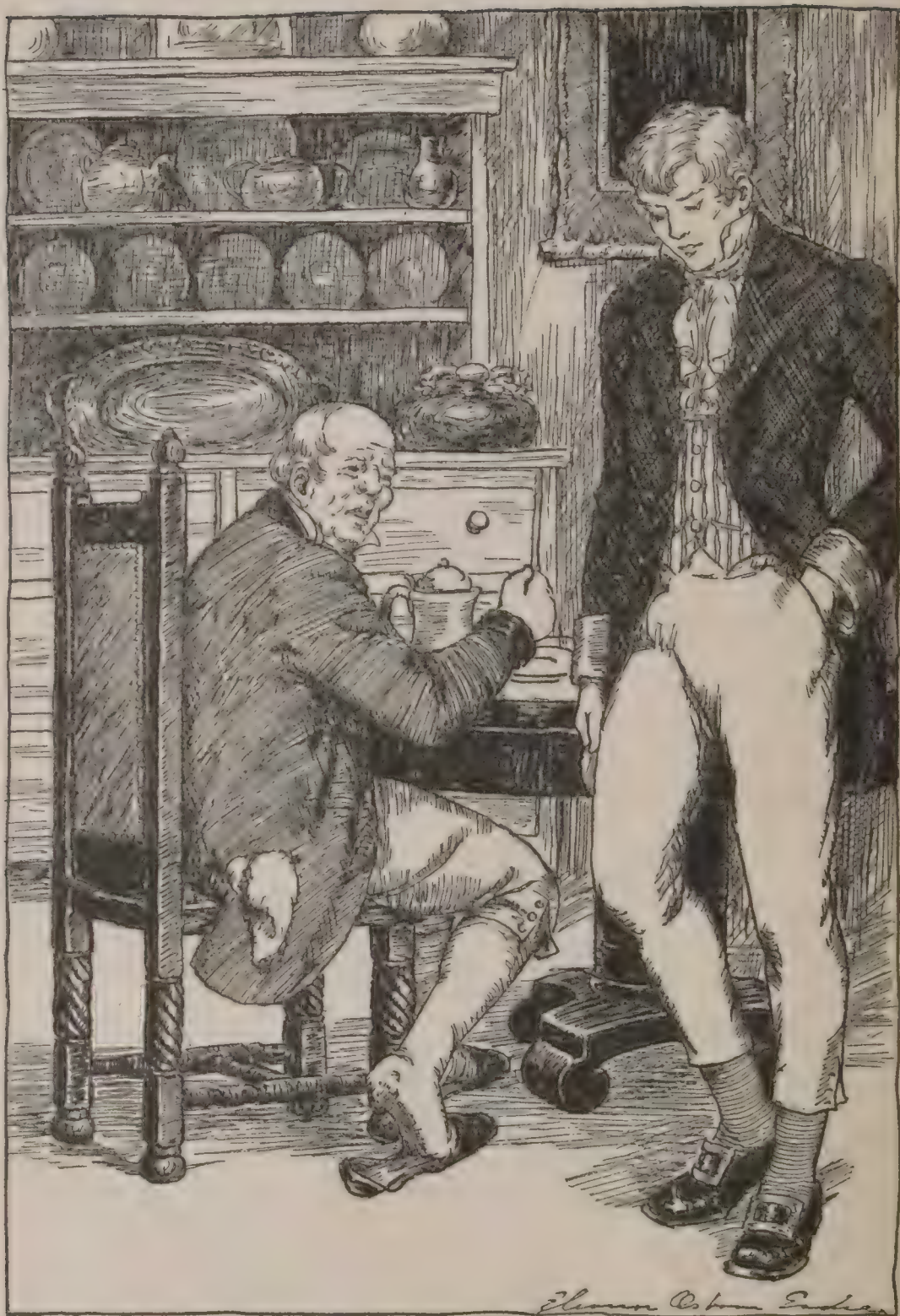
SQUIRE CASS AND GODFREY

"FATHER," said Godfrey nervously one morning, "Fowler paid that rent money. He gave it to me, and I let Dunsey take it. He was to return it in a few days."

For some time the good Squire had been much displeased with the conduct of his sons. Now, for that reason, he at once suspected some misdeed. "And pray, why did you let Dunsey take it? What right had you to let Dunsey take my money? You paid him to keep still about something, I'll wager," answered Squire Cass, whose face was red with anger.

"I meant to pay you," continued Godfrey. "I let Dunsey take Wildfire to sell him so that I could give you the money. He killed Wildfire in jumping a fence. I have nothing to pay with now."

"You are as bad as Dunsey. I tell you I won't have it. I'll turn you boys out of this



FOR SOME TIME THE GOOD SQUIRE HAD BEEN MUCH DISPLEASED WITH
THE CONDUCT OF HIS SONS.

house and marry again. Let Dunsey have the money! Why should you let Dunsey have the money? There is some lie at the bottom of all this."

"There's no lie," answered Godfrey, trying to speak carelessly. "It was just a little business between Dunsey and me."

"Bring in Dunsey. I'll hear what he has to say about it. Don't stand talking. Bring in Dunsey, I say."

"Dunsey hasn't returned yet. I don't know where he is."

"What, did he break his own neck, too?"

"No, he wasn't hurt. The horse was found dead. Dunsey must have walked away. He'll return in a few days, I suppose."

"Answer me, Sir. Why did you let him have that money?"

"Well, Father, I don't know." That was a very poor answer and Godfrey knew that it was, but he didn't want to lie.

"You don't know? I tell you that you do know. You paid him to keep still about something. Now didn't you?"

"You wouldn't care to know, Father. It is a very small matter. I would have paid the money to you if Wildfire had not been killed."

"Small matter? You use my money without telling me anything about it and now you have the impudence to call it a small matter. I've been too good to you boys. I've been too kind."

Godfrey said nothing, but his face showed that he did not think it was kindness to let boys grow up in idleness, always doing just as they pleased.

"By the way," continued Squire Cass, with a sudden calm, "how are you and Nancy getting along?" He thought this was a good time to force Master Godfrey to action in another matter in which he was most interested. "She is a good girl; pretty as Venus, too. You are old enough to think of getting married," he added slyly. "Seems to me that Nancy is just the girl. What do you say?"

"I think Nancy is a beautiful girl and good as you say, but —"

"Have you asked her? And did she say she wouldn't have you?"

"No, but I'm afraid she will say that."

"Well, then, let me take the offer for you. I'm not afraid. Most of the young men these days belong to the jellyfish family — no backbone. Suppose I ask her for you."

"I'd rather say nothing about it at present, Father. I think she is angry with me just now. A man must take care of such things for himself, you know."

"Well, take care of them then, but see that you do," Squire Cass answered firmly.

"I have no place for a wife to live. Nancy would not want to come here."

"Would not want to live here! Go on with you. If you are so very much afraid, I think it's time I did say something."

"I'd rather let it be for now. I hope you won't try to push the matter, Father."

"I will do as I please," answered the Squire.

Godfrey left the room. He had told his father about the money, but he was less at ease than he had been before. "What if father should speak to Nancy?" was the sickening

thought that kept running through his mind. He would never have the courage now to tell his father that it was impossible for him to marry Nancy because he already had a wife.

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CHAPTER X

DOLLY WINTHROP

To connect Dunsey Cass with the robbery of Silas Marner did not occur to any one. To be sure, Dunsey Cass left the day that the money was taken. But he had always come and gone as he pleased; no one thought his departure strange. Everybody knew that he had killed Wildfire and believed that he meant to stay away until the anger of his father and brother had cooled.

In Raveloe the robbery was the main topic of discussion. Everybody talked about it, but no one could say who did it. There were also many arguments about the peddler with the rings in his ears. Some of the people said they did not believe there were any rings in his ears at all, while other people declared that rings in his ears, or no rings, it was not fair to say that it was he who stole Silas's money. Every one

in the town, however, was much more interested in Silas than ever before.

But what about Silas? He felt that once again everything had gone out of his life. The loom was there, the weaving was there, but his gold, his beautiful gold, was not there. He could put his foot down on the hole, but not lovingly, for the hole was empty. Yes, he could make more money, but hope was gone.

Day after day while he was weaving, he moaned low, as one in pain. And during the evenings, as he sat alone by his small fire, he put his elbows on his knees and clasped his head with his hands and moaned very softly, as one who does not want to be heard.

Some people went to see Marner because they knew how lonely he was. Silas was friendly in his way, but he let them understand that he did not care to have them stay. He felt more friendly, however, toward one woman, Dolly Winthrop. Dolly was a good, wholesome person, and now that Silas was a sufferer, she felt drawn toward him. Silas could feel this and he was glad to have her come.

Dolly made her first visit to Silas's cottage on Sunday. She could hear his loom going before she reached the door. "Oh, it is just as I thought. He works on Sunday," she said sadly to Aaron, her young son, who was with her. She thought it wrong to work on the holy day, but she believed that Silas's sinfulness was only another reason why she must try to help him.

They had to knock loudly before Silas heard them. As he opened the door, Dolly said, "Good afternoon, Mr. Marner. I made some cup cakes yesterday and they turned out better than usual. I thought you might like some; so I ran over with them this afternoon."

Silas put out a chair for Dolly, who sat down and uncovered her cakes. Holding them out to Marner, she continued, "I don't eat cakes myself. Bread is what I like from one year's end to another, but men's stomachs are comical. They want a change — they do. They must have something sweet."

Silas thanked her for the cakes and held them close to his nearsighted eyes to look at them.

"I can't read those letters on the top of them,

Mr. Marner, but they have a good meaning. Not even the minister knows what they stand for. Aaron can read the letters. Come, Aaron, and read them for Mr. Marner." But Aaron went around behind the chair and peered through the back of it at Silas. He was too bashful to read for a stranger.

"Oh, naughty boy," said his mother mildly. "Well, never mind. Whatever the letters are, they have a good meaning. The stamp was Ben's mother's. Ben is my husband. His mother used to put these letters on cakes, and I've always put them on, too, for we need all the good there is in the world, Mr. Marner." Dolly looked intently at Silas while she was making this last remark.

"The letters are I. H. S.," said Silas. While Marner was reading, Aaron peeped around from behind the chair.

"Well, to be sure you can read them yourself. That's splendid. Ben has read them many times to me, but they get out of my head again. I hope they will bring good to you, for it's with that idea I brought the cakes."

Silas could not tell what the letters stood for, but he could tell that Dolly had come to see him because she wanted to be helpful to him in his trouble. He said, "I thank you, Mrs. Winthrop, I thank you kindly."

"You didn't hear the church bells this morning, Mr. Marner, did you? Your loom makes a noise and the frost kills the sound these cold mornings."

"Yes, I heard them," answered Silas.

"Now, Mr. Marner —" Dolly stopped a moment before she said any more. She did not wish to hurt Silas's feelings, but she felt that she must let him know what was in her heart. "It is too bad that you work on Sunday. I really want you to come to church. I wish you would come to church on Christmas Day to see the holly and to hear the songs. Put your trust in God, Mr. Marner. I really want you to do it."

"No, no," said Silas, bitterly, "I know nothing about church. I don't want to go to church. I've never been to church in my whole life."

"But you could begin. It helps you when

trouble comes," continued Dolly, in a motherly manner.

Aaron, having become used to the weaver's strange presence, came out from behind the chair, and Silas gave him a piece of cake. As he took the cake, Dolly said apologetically, "Why, Aaron, you don't want any more cake. I brought these to Mr. Marner. Don't be naughty. Come now, sing for Mr. Marner."

Aaron answered, by rubbing his head against his mother's shoulder. "Oh, that's naughty. Stand up now and sing. Mother will hold the cake until you are through." The child sang while Silas and Dolly listened.

"He sings well, doesn't he, Mr. Marner?" asked Dolly, as she stroked Aaron's brown head and thought, "It will do Master Marner good to see such a picture of a child."

"Yes, very well," answered Silas, enthusiastically for him.

"He has a voice like a bird. He can learn a Christmas carol very easily. I take it as a token for good that he learns the good tunes quickly," said the proud mother. "We must be going

home now. I bid you good-bye. If you ever feel anyways bad inside, Mr. Marner, let me know, and I'll cook you some food and clean your house."

"Tell Mr. Marner good-bye, Aaron," said the neighborly little woman.

"Good-bye and thank you kindly," said Silas as he stood in the door watching the mother and the child as they left his cottage.

Christmas Day came. The church was full of people. Dolly looked for Silas, hoping that perhaps he would have changed his mind, but he was not there.

CHAPTER XI

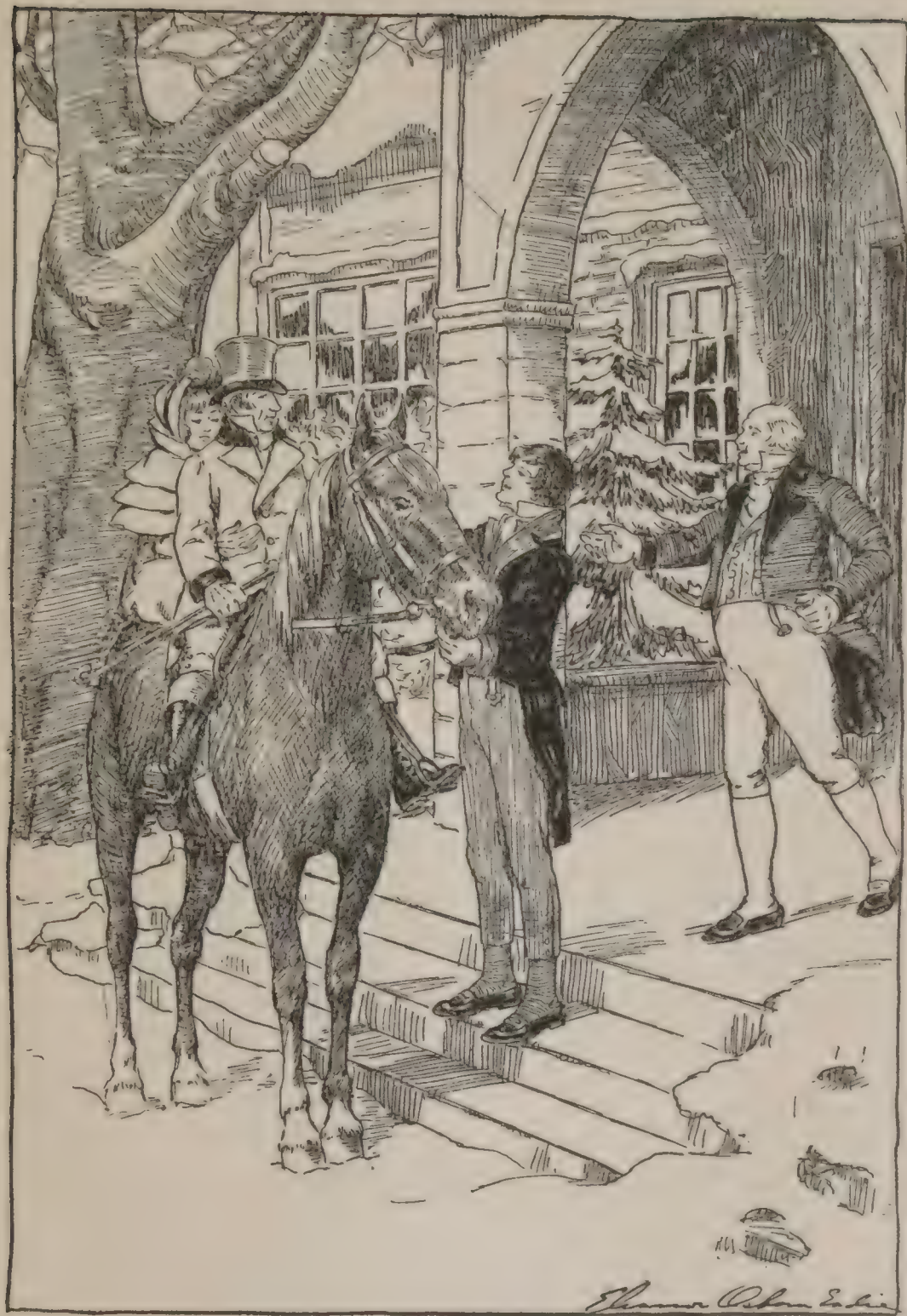
NEW YEAR'S EVE

SQUIRE CASS had only his family to dinner on Christmas Day, but many of the residents of Raveloe and some of the people of the neighboring towns were to be at the Red House on New Year's Eve.

Godfrey Cass was looking forward to the dance on that occasion. He often said to himself, "I'll have a good time then. All may be over soon. Dunsey will return and tell father about my wife, and then I'll be turned out. I'll have a good time just once more."

New Year's Eve came. Miss Nancy was at the Red House. Every one was there. Godfrey danced and ate and watched Nancy's eyes. He was alone with her, talking with her and for a time he was fairly happy.

While Godfrey was talking with Nancy, his wife, wrapped in an old shawl, was walking slowly



NEW YEAR'S EVE CAME.

through the snow toward Raveloe. She had her baby in her arms. She was on her way to the Red House for New Year's Eve because Squire Cass always gave parties on that night. She meant to tell all the guests that she was Godfrey's wife. Godfrey had said that he would rather die than to live with her. Very well! She would go in her rags and shame her husband. People would look at the baby with her golden curls and beautiful eyes and know that she was Godfrey's child.

Molly knew that opium had made her what she was, yet she wanted to make Godfrey unhappy. "He will not live with me; so I will make him as miserable as I am. I love my baby and he must take care of her. He has plenty of money and can do it easily." Such thoughts as these were running through Molly's mind.

She had set out at an early hour, but the snow was falling fast and she was weary. She rested under a shed and then tried to go on. She wanted her opium, but her mother love restrained her. She was just outside Raveloe.

"I'll go a little further," she said firmly to herself. The wind was cold. Molly felt it.

"Ah, I must have help!" she cried. Taking a little bottle from her bosom, Molly drank the black opium and threw away the empty vial. She held her child close to her breast and tried to go on. Soon the opium began to affect her. She took a few more steps. Then down, down, she sank into the snow. Her wintry bed seemed warm, and she forgot her baby; but it slept peacefully.

At last the child waked up and cried, "Mamma! Mamma!" but her mother could not hear her. The baby looked up into the dark sky. She looked around her and saw a light streaming out on the snow. She tried to catch it. She could not touch the bright ray so she followed it. The old rags in which she was wrapped dragged along behind her. She kept on going until she toddled straight up to the door of Silas Marner's cottage. She went into the room and uncertainly moved over to the fire.

An old sack was lying near the bright blaze. The baby sat down upon it and put out her

little hands to warm them. The fire made her so drowsy that she put her golden head down on the dirty sack and was soon fast asleep.

But where was Silas Marner? He, too, was in his own stone cottage. Some of the neighbors had told him that he should watch the old year out. He had opened his door as he had often done since he had lost his treasure. He had been watching, but suddenly one of his spells came on, and he became rigid; then he stood motionless by the open door, staring straight ahead with eyes that saw nothing. Because of this, the door was open for a long time. That was the reason the golden-haired child entered his house without his knowing it.

When Silas came out of the spell, he closed the door and went over to the fire to warm himself. He looked in surprise at what he saw there. What was it? Gold, his own beautiful gold, had returned to him. He reached out his hand to caress his treasure. But instead of hard pieces of money, he felt soft golden curls. Silas fell on his knees to look at the fairy sight before him.



WHEN SILAS CAME OUT OF THE SPELL, HE CLOSED THE DOOR AND
WENT OVER TO THE FIRE TO WARM HIMSELF

“Is this my little sister who has returned to me, or is it a dream?” He put more wood on the fire and looked at the beautiful child. He felt in some way that she had come to him for his very own.

The child awakened with a frightened cry. Silas took her into his arms and fondled her. She put her arms around his neck and cried, “Mamma! Mamma!” Silas held her close to him and patted her tenderly.

“She is hungry. I must get her something to eat,” he thought. He spent a whole hour in feeding her. The child then toddled around the room, and he followed her with outstretched arms, fearing that she might fall and hurt herself. She sat down and began pulling at her shoes. Silas took her into his arms again.

At last he saw that her wet shoes were hurting her. He took them off and warmed her pretty feet by holding them in his toil-worn hands. The baby played with her own pink toes and laughed merrily.

“Wet shoes,” puzzled Silas. “How did she get here? She has been walking in the snow.”

He took the baby into his arms and went to the door. "Mamma! Mamma!" the baby cried pitifully, putting out her arms into the darkness.

Silas could see something dark lying in the path before him. He went over to it. There lay a beautiful woman half covered with snow.

CHAPTER XII

THE TREASURE

WHILE these things were happening in Silas's cottage, the people at the Red House were laughing and talking gaily. The feast was over, and the young people had begun to dance. Godfrey was at his best. He had danced with Nancy again and again. Even when he had another partner, his eyes were on her. He looked up again to see her as she was crossing the room. What? Was he dreaming? Was it a ghost or was it his own child in Silas Marner's arms? He rubbed his eyes to make sure that he was awake. "Yes, it is my child. What can they be doing here?" he gasped, and then he heard his father's voice.

"How's this, Marner? What is this? Why are you coming here in this manner? Whose child have you?"

To Godfrey it seemed ages before Silas answered. He was sure that the old weaver had

learned his secret and had come to expose his sin before all the guests. His father would never forgive him, he knew. At last he heard Silas's voice again as the little man said quietly, "I've come for the doctor. I want the doctor."

"What's the matter, Marner? The doctor is here, but what is the matter?" asked a man standing near.

"It's a woman," answered Silas speaking very low. "She's dead I think. Dead in the snow at the stone-pit, not far from my door."

Godfrey had come up and heard Silas's answer. With lips quite white he groaned to himself, "What if she isn't dead? If she isn't, I am lost."

"Hurry along into the hall. I'll bring the doctor. Don't say anything. It will frighten the women," said the Squire under his breath.

But the women had already heard, and they, too, rushed across the room to where Silas was standing.

"Whose child is it?" several of them asked in one voice. There was no answer; so Nancy turned to Godfrey and asked, "Who is the woman, Godfrey? Whose baby is it?"

"I don't know. A poor unfortunate woman has been found dead. It is her baby, I think," answered Godfrey. He did not like to tell the lie; so he added under his breath, "After all, do I really know whose baby it is?"

"You'd better leave the child here," said two or three of the most motherly women. "We will find some one to take care of her. She needs a woman, you know."

"No, no, I can't part with her," replied Silas firmly. "She came to me like an angel of light, and I will keep her."

The doctor prepared himself to go with Marner, but while he was doing so, the child began to cry. Putting her arms around Marner's neck she called pitifully, "Mamma! Mamma! I want my Mamma!" Godfrey heard the cry and felt it pull at his heartstrings, but he did not say one word to the child.

"I'll go," Godfrey said, glad to do something, "I'll go for Dolly Winthrop. She can do more than any one else in Raveloe in a time like this."

"Oh, pooh," said some one. But God-

frey was gone. He remembered that he must not act like a crazy man; he tried to be calm.

With eyes full of tears, Dolly listened to Godfrey's story of a mother found dead in the snow. She was ready in a minute. She was always ready when any one needed help. She tried to persuade Godfrey to return to the party by telling him that he would catch his death of cold walking around in the snow with only his dancing shoes on his feet.

"No," replied Godfrey, trying to speak carelessly, "I'll stay now that I have come. I'll stay outside Marner's house here, and you can tell me if I can do anything."

"Well, Sir, you are very good and kind; you have a human heart in you, Mr. Godfrey," said Dolly as she went into the house.

Godfrey never knew how long he waited outside the cottage thinking, "Is she dead? If she is, I can marry Nancy. I'll find a way to take care of the child. But if she isn't dead, it is all over with me."

At last the doctor came out. "I waited for

you, in as much as I was here," said Godfrey, trying to hide his feelings.

"Pooh ! it is too bad that you came. Nothing can be done. She's dead and has been for hours, I should say," replied the doctor.

"What sort of woman is she ?" asked Godfrey, feeling the blood rush to his face.

"She is a beautiful young woman with long, glossy, black hair," answered the doctor. "She has a wedding ring on her finger, too."

"I want to look at her ; I'll overtake you. I think I saw such a woman yesterday," said Godfrey to explain his interest. He hurried into the house, but the doctor went on his way toward the Red House.

Godfrey found Silas walking the floor with the baby, trying to lull her to sleep.

"You'll take the child over to the minister to-morrow, I suppose," said Godfrey doubtfully. He was still wondering what Marner meant to do.

"No, indeed, I will not," replied Silas emphatically. "I will keep her."

"You don't want to keep her, do you ? What will you do with her ?" asked Godfrey.

"Her mother is dead and I suppose she has no father," answered Silas. "She came to me like a little lone bird, and I will keep her. My money is gone. I'm alone, and she's alone. Yes, I will keep her."

"Poor little thing," said Godfrey hurriedly. "Let me give you something to help buy her some clothes." While he was speaking, he put a few bank notes into Silas's hand and then hurriedly left the cottage.

As he overtook the doctor, Godfrey said, "She is not the same woman after all. I think her baby is perfectly beautiful."

"She looks like a fairy. If my wife were younger, I'd not let the old miser have the child," replied the doctor. "But why did you leave the dance? Has Miss Nancy been unkind to you? Did you want to pay her back by coming out in those thin shoes and taking pneumonia? You're a fool, Godfrey."

With a heart much lighter than it had been for many months, Godfrey returned to the dance. Now he was free to talk of love to Nancy. "If Dunsey returns, I can pay him

money enough so that he will keep still. I'll do something for the child, too." Such were Godfrey's thoughts as he danced and laughed with Nancy.

Poor Molly was buried in the free corner of the cemetery. The only mention of her passing was made by the people with whom she had lived. They told their neighbors all that they knew: that the woman with the long dark hair had gone away, and that she had taken her beautiful golden-haired baby with her.

CHAPTER XIII

FATHER SILAS

THE people of Raveloe again talked about Silas. The men said that he was crazy, but the women wondered how he would manage to care for the two-year-old baby. Many of them offered to help him. Dolly Winthrop came often to see what she could do, and Silas was always glad to see her.

The first time that she came to see the baby, Silas showed her the money that Godfrey had given to him and asked her to help him to buy clothes for the child.

“Now, Mr. Marner, you just buy some shoes,” said Dolly, in her motherly manner. “That is all. I have plenty of clothes that Aaron used to wear. I’ll bring them over. The baby will grow like grass.”

That same day Dolly brought over an armful of clothes. They were patched, but they were pretty and clean. Looking at the baby, Dolly

said, "The blessed child must have a bath, Mr. Marner. See how dirty her dimpled hands are." The good woman produced a new bar of soap and a freshly laundered towel. "Now I'll get some warm water," she said, "and you'll be surprised at the change I make in her in a few minutes." She took the baby on her lap and washed her well. The little one liked her bath and after Dolly had finished bathing her, she sat on the good woman's knee and laughed and played with her own pink toes.

"Look at her, Mr. Marner. An angel from heaven couldn't be any prettier. Think of those dirty clothes she had on and that poor mother frozen to death in the snow. The door was open and she walked in like a little starved bird. Didn't you say that the door was open, Mr. Marner?" asked Dolly.

"Yes," answered Silas quietly, though he did not say that he was having one of his spells. "Yes, the door was open. The money's gone and I don't know where, and the baby came from I don't know where. She's come to be my child, Mrs. Winthrop."

"Ah," said Dolly with a friendly smile, "it's like the night and the morning, and the sleeping and the waking, and the rain and the harvest. One goes and the other comes, and we don't know how nor where. We can take care of the little things, but the big ones happen in God's own way, Mr. Marner."

The baby laughed and Dolly hugged her to her bosom. "You'll have to be like a mother to her while she is little, Mr. Marner," Dolly said tenderly. "I have some time. I'll come over to help you. I'll be glad to do it for you."

"I thank you very kindly, Mrs. Winthrop, I thank you," said Silas thoughtfully. "I'll be glad to have you tell me anything. But," he added eagerly as he touched the baby's pink toes in a half-frightened manner, "I want to do things for her myself. She may like me the better if I do things for her. You show me how; I can learn."

"Yes, indeed, you can learn. I have seen men who could take care of children as well as any woman. You see, Mr. Marner, this goes

first, next to her pretty body," continued Dolly, taking up the little well-patched shirt.

"Yes," said Marner, bringing it very close to his eyes to make sure. As he did so, the baby seized his head with both her small arms and put her lips against his face with purring noises.

"See there," said Dolly understandingly, "she likes you the better already. She wants to get on your lap. Take her, Mr. Marner, and put her clothes on her. I'll show you how."

Marner took the baby. His hands were trembling with joy. He took the clothes from Dolly and put them on the child, while Mrs. Winthrop directed him. Of course, it took a long time because the baby had to play with her toes and put her arms around his neck and pull the little dress out of his hands many times.

"There," said Dolly triumphantly, "I think you did well. But what will you do with her while you work at your loom? If you have anything that she can get into, you should put it up on a high shelf."

Silas sat and reflected for a long time; at last, he answered, "I'll tie her to the leg of my loom."



MARNER TOOK THE BABY. HIS HANDS WERE TREMBLING WITH JOY.

I'll tie her with a good long string or something ; will that do ?”

“Well, maybe it will do, as she is a little girl ; it wouldn't do at all for a little boy. I know what boys are. I've taken care of four. I'll bring a little chair and some pieces of red cloth for her to play with. She'll sit and talk to her playthings as though they were alive. When she gets older, I'll teach her to wash dishes and clothes and sweep the floor.”

“But she'll be my child, Mrs. Winthrop, she'll be nobody else's,” said Marner with a look of fear coming into his eyes.

“Yes, indeed she'll be your child,” added Dolly reassuringly. “But, Mr. Marner, you must bring her up like other people. She must go to church.” Dolly felt she must say this before leaving and had been waiting for her opportunity. She must say it for the sake of the child.

Silas sat and thought for a long time. He knit his brow, but he did not try to answer.

“Has she been christened now, I wonder ?” said Dolly, realizing that she was making an impression on her neighbor.

Silas looked at her for a few minutes. At last he said very faintly, "What is christened? Won't people be kind to her if she isn't christened?"

"Oh, my," answered Dolly, "didn't you ever say your prayers? Being christened is getting a name. You must take her to church and give her a name, you know. She must be like other people, Mr. Marner."

"Yes, a name," replied Silas absently. "I have thought of a name. I'll call her Eppie. That was my baby sister's name."

As Dolly rose to go she said kindly, "I'll wash her clothes for you. We must keep her pretty and clean, you know."

Baby was christened. Silas went to church to have it done. Dolly said it was for the good of the child, and so it was done.

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CHAPTER XIV

EPPIE

As the weeks and months passed by, Marner's life was joined more closely to the lives of his neighbors. The child did it. Eppie was not like his gold which could be caressed lovingly for a while and then put away into a hole. She tried to do everything. She laughed. She ran. She jumped. She talked. She called "Da Da," a hundred times a day. Every time Silas looked at her his heart felt warm and happy. Every time other people looked at her, their hearts, too, felt warm and happy, and in addition, they felt kindly toward the old weaver who was taking care of her.

The gold had kept Silas weaving longer and longer so that the bags would grow heavier and heavier, but Eppie called him away from his weaving. She ran out into the warm sunshine. She picked the many-colored flowers. She held

out her hands to the choirs of birds that daily sang near the cottage.

When the first summer days came, Silas often went out into the fields and carried Eppie beyond the stone-pit to where the gayest flowers grew. He would sit down upon a bank, while Eppie toddled around among the brightest blossoms and gathered the prettiest ones for "Da Da."

Eppie loved the birds. Silas tried to please her by whistling their different songs. She would sit up with a little start and look around her and laugh with glee. Silas often took his baby in his arms and kissed her golden curls. He caressed her tenderly, lovingly.

As Marner sat in the fields with Eppie near by, he began to look for the sweet-smelling herbs that he had once loved. Slowly his life was changing. Once he had tried to forget everything; now he was happy and glad to remember his past life. He even told Dolly about William Dane's robbing the church and how the brethren of Lantern Yard thought that it was he.

One day when Dolly brought Eppie's clean clothes over she said, "Mr. Marner, I've been

thinking about your drawing lots. I've been thinking a great deal about it lately. I don't know that I can make you understand what I mean, but this came to me last night while I was sitting up with a neighbor who is ill. Now let me think."

"Yes, do tell me about it, Mrs. Winthrop. I like to know what you think about things. You help me," said Silas.

"Well, I can make nothing of the drawing of the lots and of the answer's coming wrong. But you see it's like this. I believe that He who made us was watching over you all the while. If you had stayed in Lantern Yard, you would never have found your little Eppie. Now just think of the good you have done for Eppie," said Dolly, tenderly.

"Yes, you are right. There is good in this world. There is much more good than we can see. It is easier to look for trouble—that is all. That drawing of the lots is dark, but the child was sent to me. Yes, Mrs. Winthrop, my beautiful baby was sent to me, and I am happy."

CHAPTER XV

THE COAL HOLE

By the time that Eppie was three years old, she did many things that some people would call naughty.

"You will have to punish her, Mr. Marner. You can't bring up a child without some kind of punishment," said Dolly Winthrop one day. "If you can't whip her, you should put her into the coal hole. That is what I did with Aaron once. I was so silly about the youngest boy that I could not whip him. I didn't keep him in the coal hole more than a minute. Of course he was all black and I had to clean him up, but it did him just as much good as a whipping."

"But are you sure that I should punish her?" Silas slowly asked.

"Yes, indeed, she must know that you are the head of this house. She'll get so naughty that

you can't live with her," replied Dolly, emphatically.

Silas wanted Eppie to love him. Would she love him if he punished her? It was clear to him that Eppie, with her short toddling steps, was leading him a merry chase; but should he try to stop her?

One morning while Silas was very busy with his weaving, Eppie reached up and took the scissors. Dolly had warned him to keep them out of the baby's way and he had tried to see that they were on the shelf. But this morning he had forgotten them and left them where she could reach them. Eppie took them and toddled quietly over to the corner. There she sat and cut, cut, cut. At last she had the string that tied her to the leg of the loom in two. Out she ran as fast as her short legs could carry her.

Father Silas was so busy that he forgot about Eppie for a few minutes. When he looked up, she was not there. He called loudly, but she did not answer. He got down from his loom. Eppie was not in the room. His first thought was the stone-pit. Cold drops stood on his

brow as he looked into the pits. The still dark water seemed to mock him as he called frantically, "Eppie! Eppie! Eppie!" A feeling of terror had seized him. "I must find her," he groaned.

He looked toward the field. The grass was high. He could not see Eppie. He went into the field and searched for his baby. She was not there. Poor, trembling Father Silas hurried on to the next field. A lake of water was in that one. He was so weak that he could scarcely make his way to it. But what greeted his anxious eyes? Was it his baby? Yes, it was his own dear Eppie, playing on the bank of the lake, using one of her tiny shoes for a bucket to carry water over to a hole.

In one minute Silas had his darling baby in his arms covering her face with sobbing kisses. It was not until he had carried her home that he thought that he must punish her. "She may run away again and fall into the stone-pit," kept running through his mind. This thought gave him the courage to punish her.

"Naughty, naughty, Eppie!" he began sud-

denly, holding her on his knees and pointing to her wet feet and clothes. "Naughty, naughty girl, to cut with the scissors and run away. Eppie must go into the coal hole for being naughty. 'Da Da' must put her into the coal hole."

He thought she would cry, but Eppie jumped down and ran over to the coal hole and tried to lift up the door. Silas opened it for her and put her inside. With trembling hands, he held the door closed for fully half a minute.

Eppie was very still for a few seconds, then her cheery little voice piped up, "Opy, opy. Da Da, opy."

Silas let her out of the hole, saying, "Now my little Eppie must never be naughty again, or she will go into the coal hole, a black ugly place." The loom stood still for a long time that morning while Silas washed Eppie and put clean clothes on her. He hoped the punishment would last for a long time. But he kept thinking, "It might have been better if she had cried."

In half an hour she was clean again. Silas took the string to tie her up, but he threw it

down again, thinking, "I have punished her. She will be good now without being tied up."

He turned around to put her into her little chair. Where was she? At that moment she laughed out gleefully, "Da Da, Eppie's in de tole hole. Eppie's in de tole hole, Da Da!" She put out her little black hands to Father Silas.

Silas laughed in spite of himself. He picked up his baby and washed her again. He spent most of that day talking and laughing with her.

"I don't believe it does any good to punish Eppie. She takes it all in fun, if I don't hurt her; and I can't hurt her," Silas said resignedly to Dolly the next day. "If she makes me some trouble, I can't help it. She isn't so naughty that she will not get over it."

"Well, that's true, Mr. Marner," answered Dolly kindly. "But if you can't bear to hurt her, you must keep everything out of her way."

So Eppie was brought up without punishment. She knew nothing about cross words and angry frowns.

CHAPTER XVI

SILAS AND HIS NEIGHBORS

WHEREVER Silas went to take the cloth which he had woven, he carried Eppie with him. Dolly Winthrop offered to care for her, but he liked to have his baby near him.

Everybody stopped to talk to the pretty child with the golden curls. She liked to talk with people, but she always held Father Silas's hand whenever she was chattering with them.

Silas's customers always asked him to sit down. So he sat and sometimes he talked with them for an hour at a time.

Some kind mothers told him about the mumps, the measles, and the whooping cough and the best remedies for them; while other women asked him if he gave Eppie plenty of milk to drink. "Milk is the very best food you can find for a child — and for yourself, too," they would add.



EVERYBODY STOPPED TO TALK TO THE PRETTY CHILD WITH THE GOLDEN
CURLS.

Those who looked at Eppie's chubby arms and round body thought that she must get good food and plenty of it.

No child was afraid of Silas when Eppie was near. There was a love between him and Eppie which made them one, and there was love between Eppie and the world. She loved the gay flowers, the friendly trees, and the busy bees. The rippling water, the fluffy clouds, and blue sky were her best friends. She loved old men and women and boys and girls. Thus, Silas, because of his love for Eppie, again loved the world and all things in it. Silas thought of Raveloe and its people in their relationship to Eppie. She must have everything that the town could give her.

One man in Raveloe watched Silas and Eppie more carefully than did any other person there, except Dolly Winthrop. This man was the young Squire, Godfrey Cass. He did what he could for his daughter. Sometimes he gave money to Marner; at other times he sent good food or furniture to the stone-pit.

Godfrey had changed. He was no longer wild

and rough. Dunsey had not come back ; hence there seemed to be no danger that any one would ever learn his secret. Some people thought that Dunstan had joined the army. No questions were asked about him because he belonged to a good family that must not be hurt by gossip.

Godfrey said to himself, "I will marry Nancy, but I will not forget Eppie. She is my child. I will do a father's part by her. I'll find a way to educate her."

CHAPTER XVII

THE GARDEN

IT was a bright Sunday morning, sixteen years after Silas had found Eppie by his fire. The bells of the Raveloe church were ringing to tell the people that the morning service was over.

The wealthiest people of the town were the first to leave the church. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass. The poorer people followed. If any one had been looking closely he would have seen that Mr. Cass was watching a very beautiful girl who had a bright, smiling face and golden curls. If he had looked more closely he would have seen that a sad expression was in the man's eyes, as the girl walked away with the poorest people of the town.

The girl's face, however, was carefree and happy, and so was the face of the old weaver who walked by her side. Dolly Winthrop and her

son, Aaron, were behind Silas and Eppie. Eppie, half-turning around said, "No, no, Aaron, I don't like my hair at all. It always jumps out from under my hat, a minute after I put it there. None of the other girls have hair like mine. I like smooth glossy hair."

"I don't want your hair to be different, Eppie," said Aaron. "Why it's as lovely as the goldenrods that dance in the breeze."

Father Silas touched a curl lovingly. "Ah, Eppie," said he tenderly, "I love your curls. You and your hair are worth more than all the gold in the whole world."

"Father, I wish we had a beautiful garden with flowers in it," said Eppie abruptly, desiring to change the subject.

"I'll make you one," answered Silas.

"You should not dig in a garden, Mr. Marner," said Aaron quickly. "Such work is too hard for you; I'll come to spade up the ground. I can come over an hour every morning before I go to work."

"You are very kind, Aaron," Silas slowly answered.

"I'll bring some choice plants, too," continued Aaron enthusiastically. "I am Squire Cass's gardener, you know; I'll bring the plants from his place. He will be glad to let you have them."

"Well, be sure that you don't bring anything that he wants," replied Silas thoughtfully. "He's been most kind to us. He built a room on our house and wouldn't take a cent for it. Then he sent over some beautiful furniture for Eppie. He's been kindness itself to me ever since I found her."

"Come over this afternoon, Aaron. You come too, Mrs. Winthrop," said Eppie as they parted.

"Oh, Father, dear Father, I'm so happy that I want to cry. I've always wanted a garden. I knew Aaron would dig it for us. I love you, Father," said Eppie as she kissed Silas's toil-worn hand.

"You'll be getting into debt to Aaron, Eppie; you must not do that."

"Oh, no, I won't," answered Eppie. "He likes it."

That afternoon Aaron and Dolly came to the



"COME OVER THIS AFTERNOON, AARON. YOU COME TOO, MRS. WINTHROP."

stone-pit. Eppie was so happy that she was to have a garden that they planned where it was to be, even though it was Sunday. As they were looking at the grounds, Dolly asked, "What is that?" She was pointing to where some workmen had been draining the fields.

"Why that's the draining," answered Silas. "The foreman told me the other day that he thought my place would be dry, too, when the drain work is completed. This land will be worth something, if it is dry."

"How strange it would seem to have no water in the pits," added Eppie.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LOST GOLD

"OH, Mrs. Cass, Mrs. Cass," called Jane, the servant girl, "do come to this window. Everybody is hurrying down to the stone-pit. Do you think some one has been hurt?"

"No, I don't think that any one has been hurt. You are too easily excited, Jane," answered Mrs. Cass. "That girl is always trying to frighten me," thought Nancy as she looked out of the window. "I don't see anything. But I do wish Godfrey would come; I don't like to sit here alone. I have such strange feelings."

At that moment, some one opened the door. Nancy knew by his step that it was Godfrey. She looked up. His face was ghastly white and his hands were trembling.

"What is the trouble, Godfrey?" she asked nervously.

"Something so terrible has happened, Nancy, that I hurried home to tell you. I am not worried for myself; I am thinking of you."

"What is it, Godfrey? Has something happened to father? Tell me quickly."

"No, nothing has happened to any one who is living. It is Dunstan, my brother Dunstan. You know he left sixteen years ago. He has been found, that is, his body has, his skeleton."

"I'm sorry, too, Godfrey," said Nancy tenderly, "but I'm sorry for you."

"The stone-pits have gone dry from the draining. Dunstan was in one of the stone-pits, Nancy. His watch and seals and my gold handled riding whip were in there with him." Godfrey found it hard to finish his story.

"Do you think he drowned himself?" asked Nancy, speaking very quietly.

"No, no, he fell in," continued Godfrey in hushed tones. "It was he, Nancy, who robbed Silas Marner."

"Godfrey, you must be mistaken. Dunstan did not do it."

"The money was in the pit with him. All of the weaver's money was there. The workmen are taking his skeleton to the Rainbow; I

hurried here to tell you. There was no stopping them you know," added Godfrey.

Nancy would have tried to comfort her husband, but she saw that he wanted to say something else.

"Everything comes out, Nancy. When God wills it, our secrets are found out. I've lived with a dread secret on my mind, but I will tell you now. I would not have you hear it after I'm dead. No, I will tell you myself."

Nancy felt afraid as she looked into Godfrey's face.

"Nancy," Godfrey continued slowly, "the woman whom Marner found in the snow was my wife. Eppie is my child."

Nancy sat very still. Her face was quite white. She did not try to speak.

"I know you'll never think the same of me again," added Godfrey in a trembling voice, "but I had to tell you now. I should never have left the child unowned; I should not have kept it from you. But I couldn't bear to give you up, Nancy. I was led away into marrying her — I have suffered for it."

Nancy lifted her eyes. "Godfrey," she said, speaking very slowly, "Godfrey, if you had told me this six years ago, we could have done much for Eppie. I would have taken her because she was yours. I could have found it easier when my own baby died, if I had had Eppie."

"I have wronged you, Nancy; I thought that you would not have anything to do with her. I have been such a coward that I even mistrusted you."

"My husband, you have wronged Eppie more than you have wronged me. We must now try to make amends to her!"

"But we can take her now. I will not mind the world's knowing it. I'll do my duty by my child," replied Godfrey, relieved by Nancy's attitude.

"I am afraid it will be different, now that she is grown," said Nancy thoughtfully. "But it's our duty to try."

"Then we'll go together this very night, as soon as everything is quiet at the stone-pit," answered Godfrey confidently. "I will tell Silas Marner myself and thank him for what he has done for me and Eppie."

“It will be different for her coming to us, now that she is grown,” said Nancy, shaking her head sadly. “But it is your duty to acknowledge her and to provide for her. I will do my part by her and pray God Almighty to make her love me.”

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CHAPTER XIX

A DECISION

BETWEEN eight and nine o'clock that evening, Eppie and Silas were sitting alone in their cottage. It had been an exciting day, and they were glad to be by themselves.

Eppie was holding both of Silas's hands while he was talking to her. "See, Eppie, there is the gold, piled just as I used to place it. I counted it every night ; it was all that I had to love. He stole my gold. I was lonely indeed, Eppie, and then you came."

Silas was quiet for a long time and then he continued. "Eppie, my child, I shuddered when I saw the gold to-day. When you first came to me I used to long for it. Later, I felt that it would be a curse to me ; sometimes I fear that gold may take you from me. You can't know, Eppie, how I loved you when you were a baby ; you can't know how I love you now."

"But I love you, too, Father; if it hadn't been for you I would have been put in an orphan's home. Nobody would have loved me."

"Our life is wonderful, Eppie; it is wonderful," said Silas, quietly. "God is good to us. I don't seem to care for the money any more. I wonder if I ever could care for it again. If I were to lose you, Eppie, I might come to think that I was forsaken again, and lose the feeling that God is good to me."

At that moment a knock came at the door. Eppie opened it and Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Cass stood before her. She made a little courtesy and held the door open for them to enter.

"We are disturbing you very late, my dear," said Mrs. Cass taking Eppie's hand.

After placing chairs for her guests, Eppie went to stand near Silas.

"Well, Marner," said Godfrey, trying to speak calmly. "I'm happy to see that you have your money again. One of my family wronged you. If I can make amends to you in any way, I'll gladly do it. I owe you for something else, too." Godfrey checked himself here because

he and Nancy had agreed that it might be better to give Eppie a home with them ; then, when she had grown to care for them, Godfrey could tell her that he was her father.

Silas was always ill at ease when he was being spoken to by his "betters," and Mr. Cass was the most important man in the village. He was asking Silas's pardon for something that a brother had done. Silas felt that the Squire was bestowing a favor upon him to enter his cottage. Naturally he answered with some constraint, "Sir, you owe me nothing. You have been very kind to me. You cannot help your brother's deed. Don't think of it again."

"But you are getting old, Mr. Marner. You have enough money to take care of yourself, but have you enough to care for Eppie?" asked Godfrey, feeling somewhat uncomfortable.

"We can do very well. It is kind of you to offer to help us, Mr. Cass. But we have everything that we want," answered Silas.

"You forget the garden, Father," said Eppie, blushing. "I want a lovely flower garden."

"You like flowers? So do I," said Mrs. Cass,

trying to help her husband. "I'll be happy to have you come over to our garden. I'll be glad to give you all the flowers that you want."

Godfrey Cass found it hard to speak what was in his mind. But at last he said, "Mr. Marner, I have plenty of money. I'll gladly make a home for Eppie. I can bring her up like a lady. This life here is too hard for her. Mrs. Cass and I have no children, you know. We will treat her as our own child."

"I don't understand you," answered Silas dully. "Do you mean you want to take Eppie over to your home to live? Leave me here without Eppie?"

"Yes, Mrs. Cass and I would like a child. We could educate her as she should be educated. I have plenty of money, and we'd like to do it. Of course you could come to see her often, Mr. Marner. We'd like to make you and her very happy."

While Godfrey was speaking, Eppie had quietly passed her arm behind Silas's head and let her hand rest against it caressingly. She felt him trembling violently. Silas was silent

for some moments after Mr. Cass had ended. He was powerless under the conflict of his emotions. At last he gained his voice and said haltingly, "Eppie, my child, I won't stand in your way. Thank Mr. and Mrs. Cass."

Eppie felt as if she were choking as she took her hand from behind Silas's head. Dropping a courtesy, she said, "Thank you kindly. You are very good, but I can't go. I can't leave my father. I can't give up the people who love me."

Eppie's lip began to tremble at the last word. She put her arms around Silas's neck, while Marner, with a subdued sob, put up his hand to grasp hers.

Tears stood in Nancy's eyes; she was sorry for Eppie. But she knew that Godfrey was disappointed; so she dared not speak.

Godfrey was surprised. He really wanted Eppie; so he responded, firmly, "Eppie, I've a claim on you, the strongest claim. You are my child. Marner, it's my duty to take her. Her mother was my wife."

Eppie had given a violent start and had turned quite pale.

Silas replied sternly, "Then, Sir, why didn't you say so sixteen years ago and claim her before I'd grown to love her? God gave her to me because you turned your back on her. He looks upon her as mine; you have no right to her. When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to him who will take it."

"I know that, Marner. I was wrong. I have repented of my conduct in that matter," answered Godfrey, who could not help feeling the sharpness of Silas's words.

"I am glad to hear that, Sir," said Silas with gathering excitement, "but I've been a father to her. It is too late for you to feel sorry now. She is my child. Your saying you are sorry doesn't change the love that has been growing between her and me for sixteen years. She has called me 'father' since she could say the word."

"I think you should look at what is good for Eppie, Marner. You are standing in her way," said Godfrey, cut by the weaver's simple words. "If you really love her, you should be glad to make a lady of her. I want to do my duty by my child."

“I’ll say no more. Eppie may go if she wants to. I love her dearly; I want her to have the best chance in all the world,” replied Silas in a trembling voice. “Speak to us, Child. I’ll hinder nothing.”

“My dear, you’ll be a treasure to me,” said Nancy in her gentle voice. “We will be happy to have our daughter.”

“I want you always to be kind to Mr. Marner. He’s been very good to you,” added Godfrey.

Eppie did not courtesy as she had done before. She stood near Silas and held his hand in hers. She grasped it firmly, while she spoke with colder decision than before. “I thank you kindly, Mrs. Cass, and you too, Sir, for your offers, but I can’t leave my dear father. He loved me from the first. He was good to me when no one else wanted me. I can think of no happiness without him. No, I thank you kindly, I can’t leave him. I’ll stay with him as long as he lives. Nobody shall ever come between him and me.”

“But make sure, Eppie,” said Silas in a trembling voice. “It is hard to stay with poor



EPPIE DID NOT COURTESY AS SHE HAD DONE BEFORE. SHE STOOD
NEAR SILAS AND HELD HIS HAND IN HERS.

people and have common clothes when you could have the best."

"I can never be sorry, Father," said Eppie tenderly. "I will never feel that I have any other father than you. You cared for me when I was a baby. I would be uncomfortable putting on fine clothes, and riding in a rich carriage, and sitting in the best pew at church. I would be unhappy living at their home. We are used to each other's ways here."

Nancy looked at Godfrey with a pained and questioning glance. His eyes were fixed on the floor. She thought there was a word which might come better from her lips than from his.

"It is natural, my dear," she said mildly, "that you should care for those who brought you up. But you owe a duty to your lawful father. Your father opens his door to you. Do you think it is right to turn your back on it?"

"I can't feel that he is my father," said Eppie, while the tears gathered. "I have always thought of a little home where Mr. Marner would sit in the corner. I can think of no other home. I was not brought up to be a lady. I love the

working people, and their food, and their ways," she ended passionately, while the tears fell. "I have promised to marry a working man, who will live with father and help me take care of him."

Godfrey, with a flushed face and smarting eyes, looked up at Nancy and said in an undertone, "Let us go."

"We won't talk of this any more now," said Nancy, rising. "We are your well-wishers, my dear, and yours, too, Mr. Marner. We'll come to see you again. It's getting late now."

In this way she excused Godfrey's abrupt departure, for he had gone straight to the door, unable to say more.

CHAPTER XX

REPENTANCE

GODFREY and Nancy walked home in silence. When they had entered the house, Godfrey threw himself into a chair. Nancy laid down her bonnet and shawl, and then stood on the hearth near her husband. She was not willing to leave him, even for a minute, because she knew that he was suffering greatly.

At last Godfrey looked up. His eyes met Nancy's. In that glance he saw that she trusted him. He put out his hand and Nancy placed hers in it. He drew her toward him and said sorrowfully, "That is ended!"

Laying her trembling hand on his head, Nancy said, "Yes, dear, we must give up the hope of having her for a daughter. It wouldn't be right to force her to come against her will. We can't change her bringing up and what has come of it."

“No,” said Godfrey with a groan; “while I’ve been putting off and putting off, the trees have been growing. It’s too late. Marner was right in what he said about turning away a blessing from my door. It fell to somebody else. I wanted to pass as childless once, Nancy; now I must pass as childless against my will.”

Nancy waited a few minutes. Then she asked, “You will not tell that she is your child?”

“No, no good could come from it. I must do all that I can for her in the state of life which she chooses. I must see who it is that she has promised to marry.”

“If it will do no good for it to be known, I should be very thankful if my family knew nothing about it,” said Nancy, somewhat relieved. “Their knowing would do no good.”

“I will put it in my will. I don’t want people to find out about my wrongdoing as they have about Dunsey’s; I’ll put it in my will. I want her to have the property. I’ve an idea who the young man is whom she is to marry,” added Godfrey. “It’s young Winthrop, Aaron

Winthrop. I saw her leaving the church with him."

"Well, he's very sober and industrious," said Nancy, trying to be cheerful about the affair.

Godfrey sat for a long time without speaking. Then he looked at Nancy and said sadly, "She's a beautiful girl, isn't she? She's bright and good, too."

"Yes, dear, she has your eyes and your hair! I wonder that I have never noticed it before."

"I think she took a dislike to me when she learned that I am her father. I could see a change in her manner after that."

"She couldn't bear the thought of giving up Mr. Marner, dear," said Nancy, wishing to comfort her husband.

"She thinks I wronged her mother. She thinks me worse than I am. But she must think it. She must never know the truth about her mother. It's part of my punishment, Nancy, for my daughter to dislike me. I deserve it for shirking a father's duty."

Nancy waited and Godfrey continued. "I haven't been so kind to you, Nancy, as I should

have been. I have scolded and grumbled considerably."

"You have been a good husband, Godfrey, but I do wish you could be more contented with your lot."

"Well, it may not be too late to mend there. But it's too late to mend some things, say what one will."

CHAPTER XXI

A JOURNEY

THE next morning, while Silas and Eppie were seated at their breakfast, he said to her, "Eppie, for more than a year I've wanted to go to a certain place. Now that we have the money, we can both go. I thought about it all night. I think we'll set out to-morrow. I want to go while the days are still balmy. We'll leave the house in Mrs. Winthrop's care. You and I will make a bundle of things and set out."

"Where are we going?" asked Eppie in great surprise.

"To my old country, dear — to the town where I was born."

"To Lantern Yard, Daddy?"

"Yes, Eppie, I want to talk to Mr. Paston, the minister. Something may have come out to make them know that I was innocent of the robbery. I want to speak to Mr. Paston about

the drawing of the lots. He was a good man. I want to talk with him about the religion of this countryside. I think he doesn't know about it."

Eppie was most joyful. She was to have the pleasure of seeing a strange country; and then there was the added delight of telling Aaron all about it when she returned. Aaron was so much wiser than she about most things that it was a great satisfaction to her to have this little advantage over him.

Mrs. Winthrop was somewhat anxious lest Eppie and Silas should be run over or meet with some other accident on their journey. But she said, "You'd be happier the rest of your life, Mr. Marner — that you would. If you get any added light about religion from the brethren of Lantern Yard, bring it back to us. We need all the light there is in this world."

On the fourth day from that time, Eppie and Silas, dressed in their Sunday clothes, were standing on the street of a large manufacturing town. Thirty years had brought about great changes in the place. Silas was so bewildered that he did not know which way to turn. After

many inquiries, they found a person who could direct them to Prison Street. When they reached this street, Silas said with relief, "Now I know where we are, Eppie. There is the jail. It is just the same."

"Oh! what a dark ugly place," she answered. "See how it hides the sky. I'm glad you don't live in this town now, Daddy."

Silas pressed Eppie's hand and replied, "Yes, my precious child, I'm glad that I don't, but Lantern Yard is not like this. I never was easy on this street. Here it is," he said in a tone of satisfaction, as they came to a narrow alley. "We go straight ahead a little way, then we turn to the left."

"Oh, Father, how stifling it is here. I didn't know that people lived in places like this, all so close together. See how pale their faces are. How beautiful the stone-pit will look to us when we return."

"It looks queer to me now, Child. I don't care for it at all. It does smell close and musty. I don't believe that it used to smell this way."

Suddenly Silas stopped and stood perfectly still, looking straight ahead.

"Daddy," said Eppie, grasping his arm, "Daddy, what is the matter?"

"It's gone, Eppie, all gone. See that immense factory building. It stands on the very spot where Lantern Yard once was," said Silas in dismay.

"It's all gone, chapel and all. See the crowds of people at work. I thought at first that they were at church. I couldn't see quite straight."

"Let's go into that little brush shop. The man there will let you sit down. You need rest, Daddy," said Eppie tenderly. She was always watchful, lest one of her father's spells should come on.

The brush-maker had never heard of Lantern Yard; neither had the many different people from whom Silas and Eppie made inquiry that day.

"The old place is all swept away," said Silas to Dolly Winthrop on the evening of their return. "The graveyard is gone. My old home is gone. People had never heard of Mr.

Paston. That drawing of the lots is still dark. I suppose it will be dark until the last."

"Yes, Mr. Marner," said Dolly thoughtfully, "it seems you'll never know the right of it now. But that doesn't hinder there being a right. It was the will of Him above that it should happen in that way. I'm sure of that, even if we get no more light."

"You are right, Mrs. Winthrop," agreed Silas. "Since the child was sent to me I've come to love her as myself. She is light enough for me to trust by. She says she'll never leave me; I'm sure I can have faith and trust until I die."

CHAPTER XXII

SPRINGTIME

THERE was one time of year which the people of Raveloe thought to be especially suitable for weddings. It was when the purple tinted lilacs showed their wealth of blossoms and when the young calves drank bucketfuls of fragrant milk. People were not so busy as they were later when the cheese making and the mowing set in. It was the time, too, when a light bridal dress could be worn with comfort and seen to advantage.

The sunshine fell warmly on the lilacs the morning that Eppie was to be married. It seemed to realize that the bride's wedding dress was thin and dainty. The dress, which was white with tiny pink sprays at wide intervals, was Eppie's selection. It was one of her wedding gifts from Mrs. Godfrey Cass.

As Eppie walked across the churchyard and down the village, she seemed to be attired in pure

white. Her hair looked like the dash of gold on a lily. One hand was on Aaron's arm. With the other she clasped the hand of her father, Silas.

"You won't be giving me away, Father," she had said before going to the church. "You'll only be taking Aaron to be a son to you."

Dolly Winthrop walked behind with her husband, and there ended the wedding party.

Every one in the village was out to see the bridal group, except the Squire, Godfrey Cass. He would have been there, but he had been called to a near-by town on business for the day. But before leaving he had ordered a wedding feast at the Rainbow for the young couple. Naturally, he wanted to do everything that he could for the old weaver who had been wronged by a member of the Cass family.

The bridal party greeted every one courteously. They stopped, at Dolly's suggestion, to shake hands with old Mr. Macey, who was confined to an invalid's chair."

Mr. Macey had his speech ready, "Mr. Marner, I've lived to see my words come true,"

he said in a high pitched trembling voice. "I was the first man in this town to say that there was no harm in you. I was the first to say you should get your money back. You have a happy family here, and you deserve it."

A party of guests were assembled before the Rainbow, although it was still an hour before the time appointed for the feast. They met early to enjoy their own gossip. Naturally, Silas Marner was the topic of conversation.

As the bridal party approached the inn, welcoming cheers greeted them from the Rainbow yard. Ben Winthrop joined the crowd and received congratulations. But the other members of the party went on to the stone-pit for a quiet interval, before joining the company.

Eppie now had a larger garden than she had ever anticipated. The house had been enlarged and improved to meet the needs of the larger family, as Aaron and Eppie were to live at the stone-pit with Silas. Mr. Godfrey Cass had paid for all of the improvements. He had been most particular in planning the garden because he knew that it would give joy to Eppie. It was

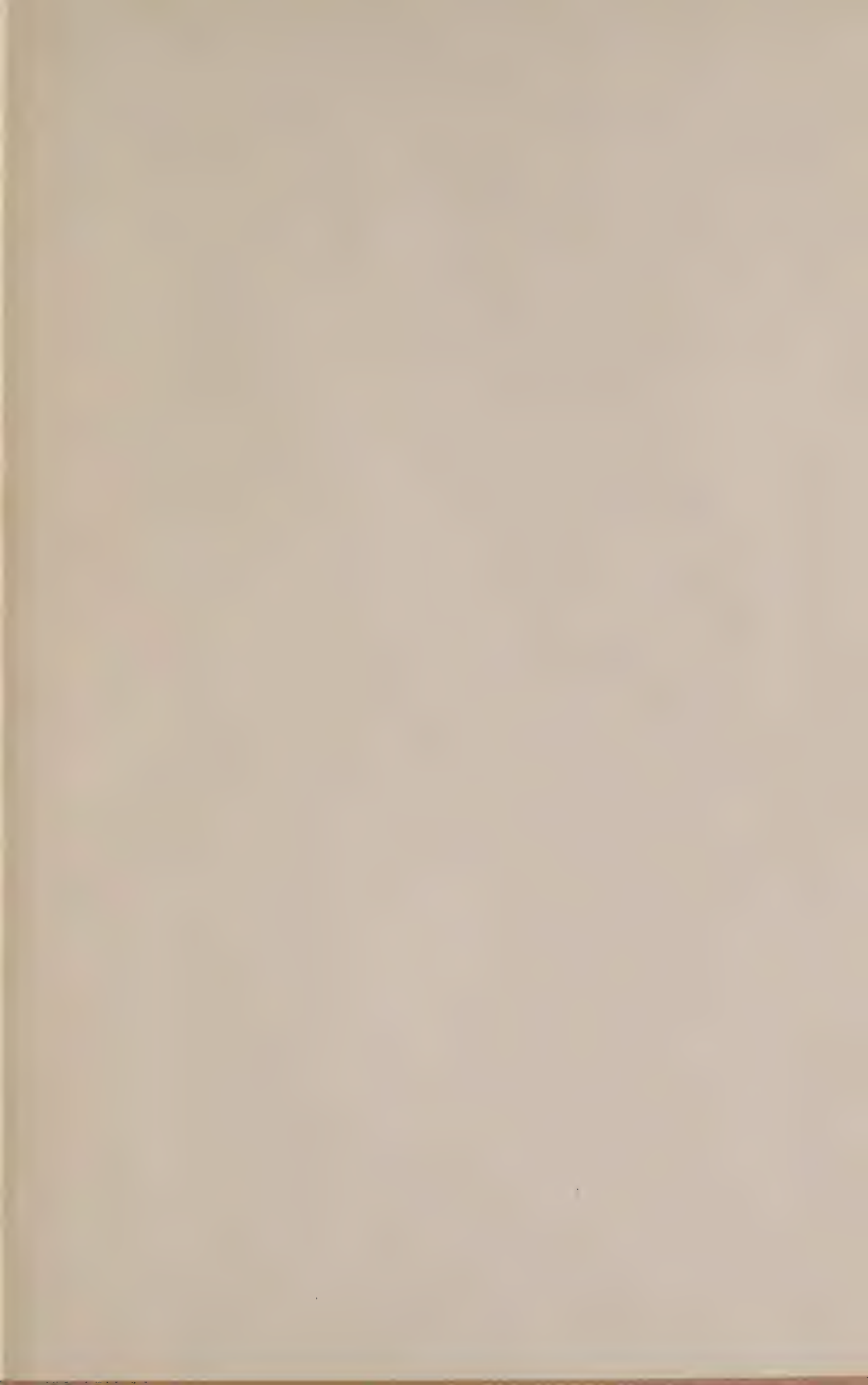


AS THE BRIDAL PARTY APPROACHED THE INN, WELCOMING CHEERS
GREETED THEM FROM THE RAINBOW YARD.

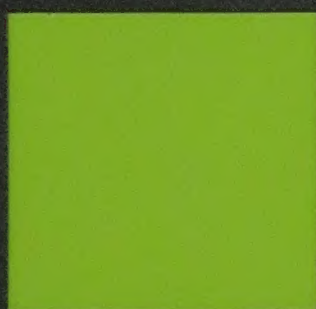
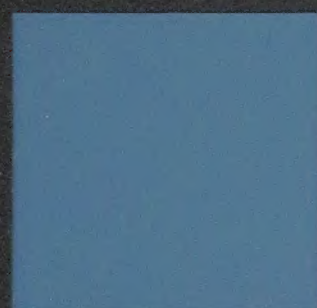
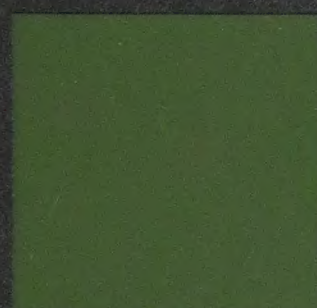
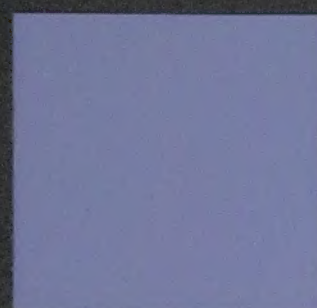
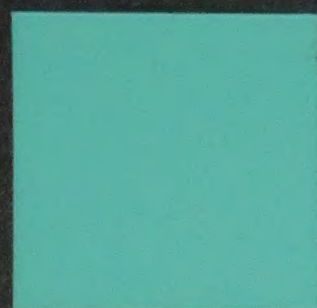
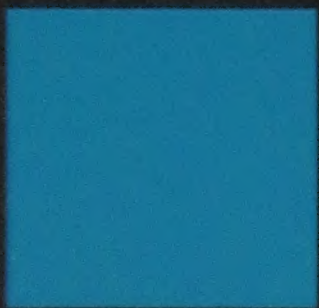
fenced with stones on two sides, but the front section was enclosed by an open fence.

As the four united people came toward the garden, the flowers looked their brightest and seemed to nod with answering gladness.

“Oh, Father,” whispered Eppie joyfully, “look at the flowers. Look at our new home. Isn’t everything beautiful? I think that people could not be happier than we.”



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SILAS MARNER

